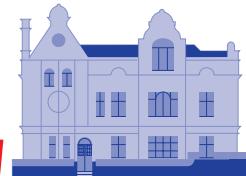


OSWESTRY & BORDER CHRONICLE



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2017

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TOP WHERE SOLD

Online appeal helps out homeless teenager

A TEENAGER who had been sleeping rough under a bridge in Oswestry for four weeks has been given emergency hotel accommodation thanks to an online appeal.

More than £1,000 was raised in just three days to help the young Oswestry man after his plight was discovered.

The Chalk community interest

company, which organises an open house lunch on Christmas Day, had been giving out sleeping bags and warm clothes to those who are living in makeshift or cold accommodation in the town.

Gemma Cassin from Chalk said: "We met a scared, cold, vulnerable teenager who had been sleeping under a bridge due to family break-

down. He is not priority for the council so they were unable to offer him emergency accommodation.

"We felt he was too vulnerable to continue sleeping under a bridge so paid for him to spend the night in a hotel."

Unable to fund further nights for the teenager, Chalk launched a Go-FundMe appeal on the internet.

Gemma said: "We'd really like him to be somewhere safe and warm while we support him back into the life he wants – a home and a job. Chalk is a small business without the finances to keep him there." Gemma said the 19-year-old had been working just a few months ago and had done since 15.

She said: "He unfortunately lost

his job due to him being homeless." In just 72 hours the appeal had raised £1,030 of the £1,045 that Chalk says will keep him in safe accommodation until the new year. Meanwhile, bosses at Chalk are appealing for blankets and sleeping bags to help those in need. They said Oswestry had a "hidden homeless" problem.

● **Hidden – See Page 12**

CRISIS 'PROVES WE NEED UNIT'

Report by Sue Austin

THE current maternity crisis in Shropshire proves the birthing unit at Oswestry must be reopened permanently, campaigners insisted this week.

The ward, housed at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital, will reopen on January 1 after being closed for six months because of staff shortages.

However, its long-term future is uncertain. Consultation over a countywide review of maternity services – which recommends only having births at the Royal Shrewsbury or Princess Royal hospitals or at home – is due to begin in the new year.

To add to the uncertainty, the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital maternity unit is currently closed due to roof damage which means expectant Oswestry parents who want to have their child in Shropshire have to travel to Telford or choose a home birth.

Liz Grayston from the Save Oswestry Maternity Unit campaign urged mothers-to-be not only to book in to have their babies delivered in Oswestry from January 1 but to make use of the inpatient, post natal care.

This can be used by mothers who not only give birth in Oswestry but also in the consultant unit in Telford. Mrs Grayston said: "Women in this area must show how important the birthing and post natal inpatient unit is for Oswestry by using it. There are very worried mothers-to-be and their families who thought that they would have to, reluctantly, have their babies delivered in Shrewsbury who are now having to go to Telford between now and January 1."

Health bosses have defended the proposed future arrangements, insisting they will bring an improved service.

● **Better – See Page 2**

Colourful costumes add to the festive fun



And they are off – the front runners dart off as they take on the festive fun run at the British Ironwork Centre. Photo: Tim Thursfield.

SCORES of fundraising runners ditched the usual hi-tech training gear and instead decked themselves in tinsel, fancy dress costumes and Santa hats when they completed a festive fun run near Oswestry in aid of a good cause.

Ashling Donohoe-Harrison, 32, and Victoria Hall, 38, organised the family event at the British Ironwork Centre at Aston as part of their fundraising for next year's London Marathon.

The pair are running the marathon in aid of Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital in Gobowen, where they both work.

The sold-out fun run on Sunday saw 175 runners complete a three kilometre course around the popular tourist attraction which was decorated ready for Christmas.

Ashling, who works in the X-ray department at the award-winning hospital, said: "It went so well and I'm just so glad the weather dried up for us."

"When we were setting up in the morning it was pouring with rain so I was just praying it was going to be alright."

"It was absolutely magical because the ironworks was all decorated."

"I just want to say a big thank you to the ironworks because they have been so helpful."

"All of the money raised through entry fees will go straight into our marathon fund for the hospital."

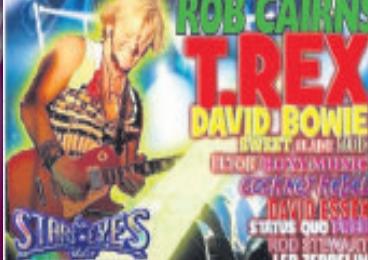
● **Cheer – See Page 8**



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EDUCATION Parents' group urges council to stand firm over row

A GROUP which represents parents who want their children to be educated in Welsh has called for a council to stand firm over a move which could scupper a £13 million schools plan for Welshpool.

It was revealed last week that an unknown person asked for listed building status for Ysgol Maesydre, a move which may scupper the development of two schools, a Welsh and an English medium school. Now Ceri McEvoy, director of development at Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg, has weighed into the argument and wants Powys County Council to fight the listed building proposal.

She said: "We have written to the cabinet member for education to express our genuine concern about these recent reports which suggests that there are serious risks to the plans for long-term investment in Welsh medium primary education provision in Welshpool."

"The demolition of the old Maesydre School is an essential part of the development and means that Welshpool's first Welsh medium school will be permanently housed in a purpose-built building with first class resources."

The organisation has pledged to give its full backing to the council.

BUSINESS Last-ditch deal will 'ensure care'

BRITAIN'S second-biggest care homes operator, which has a site near Oswestry, has struck a last-ditch deal with its major creditor that staves off the immediate threat of administration.

But the future of 17,000 elderly residents across 343 homes run by Four Seasons is still in doubt. Locally the company operates Meadowbrook Care Home in Gobowen.

The new deal will ensure "continuity of care for residents" until a long term restructuring is agreed, bosses say.



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Hospital helpers' commitment is recognised

Report by Lisa O'Brien

SHAKING-UP maternity services in Shropshire will be a "change for the better", health bosses have insisted.

Proposals for a new service model for midwifery led services have been approved for consultation by Shropshire clinical commissioning group.

The model will be presented to Telford CCG's governing body on January 9 and will need similar approval before a consultation can begin.

The revised model would see women giving birth at Telford, Shrewsbury, or at home, while antenatal and postnatal care would take place at maternity hubs across the county, earmarked for Shrewsbury, Telford, Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Oswestry.

Under the plans births will no longer take place at Oswestry's maternity unit.

The proposals have been put forward following a review.

Health bosses say the findings demonstrated a mismatch between staffing and activity.

They say under the existing system it is not possible to guarantee one-to-one care during delivery, as there is a shortfall of midwifery cover at the consultant unit - where 85 per cent of women have their babies, and an excess of midwifery cover at the three smallest freestanding midwife led units.

Dr Jess Sokolov, Shropshire CCG's clinical lead for the midwife led services review, speaking on behalf of both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin CCGs, said: "The current system cannot remain as it is because the midwives are not based in the places where they are actually needed. I understand people may have concerns about change but this proposal is a change for the better where services are actually being enhanced to offer more support for more women close to home."

"Whilst the proposed new model will continue to offer a full range of birthing options, it also introduces a new concept of maternity hubs across the county to bring together a whole range of maternity related services."



Representatives from the League of Friends group at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital receive the award

THE League of Friends at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital received the partnership award at the hospital's awards evening.

Chair of the League of Friends Peter David said: "This accolade pays tribute to the unending support we receive from our fundraisers and volunteers.

"We are so pleased to receive this on their behalf and extend a huge thank you for their generous service."

The award to the League of Friends was presented by Kerry Robinson, director of strategy and planning at the trust who praised the group's support and dedication to the hospital.

The group is currently searching for more volunteers, bosses at the organisation have said.

Anyone with some spare time and who would like to help the group should contact Victoria Sugden on (01691) 404401 or (01691) 404527.

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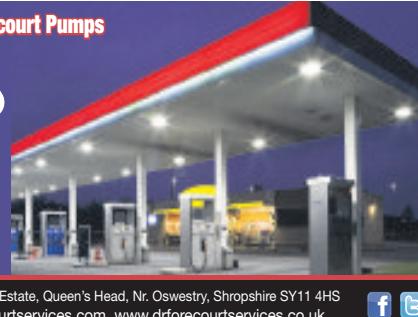
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Plans for ballooning festival are supported

COUNCILLORS have unanimously backed plans to bring a balloon festival to Oswestry next year.

During a special meeting on Monday evening, Oswestry Town Councillors heard proposals about holding a balloon festival in the centre of the town in Cae Glas Park.

The festival would be held between Lindstrand Balloons, Cloud Nine Balloons and Nightingale House charity, which ran an original event in Llangollen. Town Clerk Dave Preston told councillors that Lindstrand had agreed to underwrite a cost of between £6,000 and £10,000, to cover balloon gas, camping and hospitality for balloon owners.

Mayor Vince Hunt said: "I fully support this and by us putting this on it shows what we have just agreed on our commitment to tourism."

"We have put a number of successful events on and for me this event is perfect for the town."

"It will raise revenue and I think we will get money back on our investment."

Mr Preston said the council had budgeted £10,000 for costs such as security, road closures and holding live music on the Bailey head.

Councillor Peter Cherrington added: "I agree this will increase the future for the town and will attract people to Oswestry for years and years to come."

Crews called to tackle unsafe roof

FIREFIGHTERS were called out to help fix an unsafe roof in Welshpool.

Crews were called at mid afternoon on Thursday last week to a block of offices in Church Street. They used equipment to make the area safe. No injuries were reported.

It was believed that the adverse weather conditions of the previous week caused the damage.

Report by Jordan Reynolds

SHROPSHIRE'S hospitals are introducing a new protocol after the death of a respected journalist.

Mike Robinson, from Oswestry, died at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital on September 8.

The 65-year-old had been diagnosed with oesophageal cancer and had a feeding tube fitted through his abdomen into his bowel.

An inquest Tuesday heard the tube moved from its place in the bowel and the contents went into Mr Robinson's body, leading to sepsis and his death.

Giving a narrative conclusion, Coroner John Ellery said: "Mr Robinson has died not because of cancer but from consequences following this surgical procedure. There was a failure to monitor its position and a failure to recognise that it had become displaced. The displacement of the tube led to Mr Robinson's premature death because he would not have died when he did had the tube not been displaced and had the nutrients not gone outside his abdomen leading to sepsis from which he died."

Jon Lacy-Colson, consultant colorectal surgeon, said he had no doubt that the tube was in the right place when the operation was being performed. He said: "Post mortem it had shortened and was outside the bowel. It relies on somebody checking and recording to make sure it was in place afterwards and we found no record that it was checked. The trust does not currently have a routine protocol, we feel moving forward it's appropriate for us to have a routine protocol for staff to follow."

The inquest also heard that Mr Robinson's family had concerns over the speed of his diagnosis.

Manel Riera was the endoscopist Mr Robinson was referred to on a routine basis by his GP.

Mr Riera told the inquest in Shrewsbury: "On balance he would still have advanced cancer unfortunately if he'd waited two weeks rather than a routine referral, I don't believe this would've changed his outcome."

Former Eastenders actor Tony Discipline is playing Prince

Charming, Megan Ashley, who is

starring as Snow White, Michael Jenkins from Gobowen and who is playing Herman the Henchman and Kyle Corrin, who is playing Muddles, spent the afternoon entertaining and chatting to the youngsters.

The children were even treated to a song from Snow White - who sang 'How Far I'll Go' from the popular Disney film 'Moana'.

Michael, who is also directing the pantomime, said it was a "joy" to

visit the children. He said: "It was wonderful to spend time on Alice Ward entertaining and interacting with the children. Pantomime is all about having fun and making everyone smile, and from the children's faces, it certainly looked as though they enjoyed our time with them."

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

will be at the Stiwt Theatre until December 31. Tickets are available from stiwt.com or by calling the box office on (01978) 841300.

NEWS IN BRIEF

80 drink drive arrests are made

MORE than 80 motorists have been arrested for drink or drug driving in the first few days of a festive crackdown.

West Mercia Police said it has arrested 84 people across the force area during the Christmas and New Year campaign.

The force launched the campaign on December 1 with enforcement activities across the region.

Over the past three years, 13 people were killed and 109 seriously injured in West Mercia following collisions where drink or drugs were recorded as a contributory factor, police bosses have said.

Council tax rises by 2.37 per cent

HOUSEHOLDERS in Shropshire will be facing an increase in their council tax bill next year.

Members of Shropshire Council's cabinet gave the go-ahead for a 2.37 per cent increase in properties for 2018/19.

Leader of the council, Councillor Peter Nutting said the increase would feed into the budgets of town and parish councils, adding: "They should end up better off."

Jobless total falls for a third month

UNEMPLOYMENT in Shropshire has fallen for a third month in a row.

The latest claimant count figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that 50 fewer people claimed unemployment related benefits in Telford & Wrekin last month - taking the total to 1,825.

This represents 1.7 cent of the workforce.

But in the Shropshire Council area, the claimant count increased by 10 to 1,975, meaning that 1.1 per cent of the workforce was receiving jobless benefits.

The 640 people claiming benefits in Powys was down 40 from last month's figure, leaving the Mid Wales county with a claimant rate of 0.8 per cent.

• **Welcomes - See Page 16**

New protocol at hospital after journalist's death

Panto stars cheer up young patients



With young patient Olivia Ferraday at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital are Michael Jenkins, Megan Ashley, Olivia's mum Hannah Jones, Tony Discipline and Kyle Corrin

THE cast of a popular festive pantomime delivered a jolly helping of Christmas cheer to the children's ward at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital when they popped in for a visit.

The young patients on Alice Ward

were treated to a visit by the stars of the pantomime Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, taking place at The Stiwt Theatre in Rhosllannerchrugog near Oswestry this month.

Former Eastenders actor Tony Discipline, who is playing Prince

Charming, Megan Ashley, who is

starring as Snow White, Michael Jenkins from Gobowen and who is playing Herman the Henchman and Kyle Corrin, who is playing Muddles, spent the afternoon entertaining and chatting to the youngsters.

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Dementia award recognises Val's work

A WOMAN has won a national Dementia Friendly Award for her outstanding contribution.

Val Brown, from Oswestry, was one of three finalists in her category, and scooped the prize at an awards ceremony in London.

She is an ex-carer who has been

involved with the Alzheimer's Society for the last 28 years, and has organised memory walks and raised thousands of pounds.

The former carer is not only committed to fundraising but also for people to have a better understanding of dementia. Being an ex-

carer she knows the difficulties and stigma that can still be attached to having dementia and does all she can to raise awareness through dementia friends sessions.

She said: "My work started in 1989 and I am the only person going from a group of 30 volunteers."

And she added: "I am very humbled as there were some fantastic people nominated. I am going to show this award to people back in Shropshire and Telford, I couldn't have done it without my fellow volunteers and the colleagues at Alzheimer's Society."

Campaigners urge public to have say on homes plans

Report by Rob Smith

CAMPAGNERS are urging residents to take part in key consultation on Shropshire Council's future housing provision before time runs out.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) wants as many people as possible to take part in the consultation, which closes tomorrow (Friday).

The consultation was launched on October 27 following the publication of the council's update to its Local Plan, which detailed its preferred options for the scale and distribution

Talks held on independence

A PRO-independence group has staged a public meeting in Welshpool in the hope of forming a local branch.

Yes Cymru branches have formed all over the country as people hold rallies to get people to support Welsh independence.

One of the founders, Iestyn ap Rhobert, said it is a cross party group. He added: "What we find is that while many people are interested in local politics and national politics, they are not so keen on the way party politics works.

"Yes Cymru is a bottom-up organisation rather than a top-down one. We don't have a lot of policies we expect members to subscribe to. Instead we want to discuss the practicalities of Wales as an independent country - what that would mean." The group's meeting took place in The Pheasant Pub in Welshpool last night (Wednesday).

of development over the coming 20 years. The plan stated a requirement for an additional 28,750 homes across the county, which CPRE is strongly contesting.

Charles Green, spokesman for CPRE Shropshire, said: "It is of vital importance for the future protection of Shropshire that people act. The run-up to Christmas is incredibly busy for everyone but just 15 minutes to respond to the council's survey could make a significant difference.

"For many years we've heard that a 'dog is for life, not just for Christmas' and in much the same way, if the council is allowed to plough ahead with this overblown level of development, it will affect us all forever, not just in the short-term. It's easy, when you're already busy, to think someone else will take action, or you can't really make a difference anyway. However, the people of Shropshire have the absolute commitment of the CPRE that we will continue to hold the council to account - we just need your input to back us up." Since Shropshire Council published the update, the CPRE has been active in its campaigning to raise awareness of what it sees as fallacies at play in the council's plans.

Tree of Light success grows



Rotary club members at the Tree of Light outside the Sainsbury's store in Oswestry OSWESTRY Rotary Club's annual Tree of Light Appeal got off to a great start when the tree lights were switched on outside Sainsbury's store in Oswestry by entrepreneur Prof Dr Peter Starbuck.

Accompanied by the Porthwayaen Silver Band, a hardy crowd of shoppers braved the cold to join in the Christmas carol singing to launch this year's appeal.

"We are aiming to beat last year's total of

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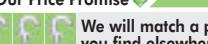
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Court prosecution prompts counterfeit goods warning

Report by Jonny Drury

TRADERS who supply counterfeit goods over the internet or through local supply chains could face legal action with substantial penalties, as well as losing all the money they have made from their criminal activities, Powys County Council has warned.

The warning has been issued by the council's Trading Standards Service after it successfully prosecuted a man in court for offering counterfeit goods he had bought to sell on.

Home fears man took his own life

A PENSIONER took his own life after becoming worried about having to leave the house he had lived in all his life.

John Bryan Rowlinson, 72, from Morda, Oswestry, died in August in his home.

An inquest heard Mr Rowlinson was born in the house and had lived there his whole life. Coroner John Ellery said Mr Rowlinson believed he was not going to be able to move back into his house after repairs were done and was going to have to live in Minsterley. He said: "He was a single man, he never married and he didn't have any children. His parents died some time ago. After his parents died he became a sitting tenant. He was worried that he was being asked to leave his property. He would have had rights to stay there. New landlords had taken over and in order to carry out repairs they asked him to move out temporarily for repairs to be completed and he would then move back in."

"I understand John was concerned that he was going to be made to leave."

"He went to see the local council and arrangements were being made that he could go to Minsterley. That seems to be the prime reason."

Mr Ellery recorded a conclusion of suicide.

David Gospel, now of Birmingham but formerly of Welshpool, pleaded guilty to five offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994 at Llandrindod Wells Magistrates Court and was sentenced to a 12-month community order.

He was also given 15 hours probation, 80 hours unpaid work and ordered to contribute £500 to the council's costs of £1,975 as well as having to pay a £85 victim after an early plea.

During the hearing, Robert Brown prosecution solicitor explained that the proceedings involved an investigation conducted by officers from the council's Trading Standards Service, after they were called in by Dyfed Powys Police after Gospel was stopped on a road traffic stop in October 2016.

His vehicle was found to contain a quantity of suspected counterfeit goods, mostly clothing and footwear, and further quantities were also found at his home premises in Welshpool in a subsequent search.

Trading standards officers also found that Gospel had offered the goods on various sites on social media. All products were seized by Trading Standards and all found to be counterfeit.

Councillor Jonathan Wilkinson, cabinet member for trading standards, said: "We support legitimate businesses and local tax payers by targeting illegal shadow economy activities such as product counterfeiting by individuals, who have little regard to the county's traders and only seek to further destabilise our economy. Firm action is needed on any issues related to product counterfeiting to promote fair trading within our community and to take the criminal benefit away from those that conduct in criminal activity. We will continue this work to support the intellectual property rights of our local businesses."

Samson is voted the top dog



This eye-catching image of Samson the springer spaniel was voted the best by our readers

WELL, your votes have been cast and we can reveal the winner of our Animal Crackers photo competition is this image of Samson the springer spaniel, from John Davies of Rhayader.

Earlier this year we asked you to send in your favourite image of your pets and we were inundated with entries.

And over the last few weeks we asked readers to vote for our selected finalists.

Samson accrued most votes in our competition, which has a £100 cash prize for the top spot.

Many thanks to everyone who took part in the competition and to everyone who cast a vote to choose the winner.

Monday collections are early due to Christmas Put your bin out tonight for collection on Saturday

We've changed your usual collection day over the Christmas period.

Usual collection day

- Monday 25 December 2017
- Tuesday 26 December 2017
- Wednesday 27 December 2017
- Thursday 28 December 2017
- Friday 29 December 2017
- Monday 1 January 2018
- Tuesday 2 January 2018
- Wednesday 3 January 2018
- Thursday 4 January 2018
- Friday 5 January 2018

These dates are the same as those on your collection calendar

Revised collection day

- Saturday 23 December 2017
- Wednesday 27 December 2017
- Thursday 28 December 2017
- Friday 29 December 2017
- Saturday 30 December 2017
- Tuesday 2 January 2018
- Wednesday 3 January 2018
- Thursday 4 January 2018
- Friday 5 January 2018
- Saturday 6 January 2018

Red = earlier collection Blue = later collection

These changes start the weekend before Christmas and end on Saturday 6 January 2018.

Collections will return to normal from Monday 8 January 2018.

If you have lots of cardboard, please cut or tear into pieces the size of your blue bag and secure together.



In bad weather: please leave bins out until they are collected. For boxes and blue bags, please take them back in if they're not collected as they can be a trip hazard, and put them out on the next scheduled collection day.



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BREEZE ABOUT TOWN

I've been more than a little hacked off in the past week by people moaning and groaning about the council not clearing the snow from roads leading to houses in the most obscure locations of Powys.

People really do expect too much.

Welshpool and the borders areas were hit by the worst snow in over a decade.

Like many others I found myself cut off by road for three days.

And that was even with a 4x4 parked on the drive.

That's because I choose to live on the top of a hill.

I accept that from time to time extreme weather might cause me a problem.

But it seems not all feel the same way.

People welcomed the opportunity to sound off on social media that gritters were not reaching their homes.

I wonder sometimes which world some of these people really live in.

Staff in the Powys County Council highways department worked around the clock for days.

They struggled to keep the main routes open through the massive county and sometimes putting their own safety at risk to keep on the move.

And thanks to modern communication methods the council kept us all up to date on road conditions and with weather warnings.

There were moans that salt bins were not being re-filled in cut-off locations.

And there were even complaints that recycling hadn't been collected from residents on streets and roads which were clearly impassable.

Where do these people come from?

Powys County Council has the most up-to-date equipment for dealing with snow but we have to accept that it will never be possible to keep the whole of the county on the move in situations like we have just experienced.

Some of the moaners would do well to hear two heart-warming stories which emerged in Welshpool to help restore faith in the younger generation.

The first involved a young lady knocking on the doors of residents in sheltered housing accommodation and offering to go out for essentials for those trapped inside and the second saw a young man offering people lifts on his quad bike to get them to and from their "cut-off" properties.

It's not all bad news.



The building of the bypass is a huge undertaking



Nick Cleary and Russell George on the hardcore base



Construction on the Dolfor Bridge is an impressive sight

Shape of things to come as bypass work continues

Work is continuing on a new bypass for Newtown. JONNY DRURY finds out more

ANYONE from Oswestry or Welshpool who has needed to drive through Mid Wales will know all about the traffic problems in Newtown.

Congestion in Newtown has been a word on almost everyone's lips for decades and calls for a bypass have long been ringing around the Montgomeryshire area.

Two years ago that dream became a reality when the green light was given to a bypass to finally be built at a cost of £60 million.

A year-and-a-half later and commuters and residents are starting to see glimpses of the road they will soon be driving along.

More than 50 per cent of the work has now been completed by Alun Griffiths contractors, who won the bypass contract following a three-week public inquiry back in June 2015.

The scene along the route now is a far cry from the scene back in 2006, when the streets were gridlocked and the Welsh Government first started looking at the possibility of a bypass.

Project manager Nick Cleary said a lot of work had already taken place, but there was much more to do before the first car takes a drive down the new roadway.

He said: "I am happy with where we are, and we are on time for the contract completion date in the spring of 2019. "However if we can meet targets then



Nick Cleary and Montgomeryshire AM Russell George look at progress

it could be done by the end of 2018. It is as we were expecting, but there is a long way to go yet.

"A lot of work has been done, but a lot of work is left to do.

"Certain things need to be done at certain times for other things to take place.

"We've got one-and-a-half winters left to go and some things are weather dependent, such as the wind and putting up structures."

The battle for a bypass in Newtown has been one that has rumbled on for decades.

Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies and Assembly Member Russell George, and the politicians that came before them were pushing for this monumental development to take place.

Work first started taking place around 2006, with the Welsh Government looking at ways to alleviate traffic problems in Newtown.

However, at that time the word bypass was not mentioned as a concrete option. But in 2009 plans started to be drawn up and various routes were put before a three-week public inquiry. The scene now looks completely different to that of 18 months ago, with Glandulas Bridge on the south of the route complete and the Upper Dolfor Road bridge built and in use.

The biggest structure of the route, the bridge at Dolfor Road, which is 94 metres in total span is midway through completion.

It is one of 11 structures that need to be built, including seven bridges.

Four underpasses are to be built, two of which are completed and the route also includes 14 tunnels for wildlife to pass under the road.

The construction is the biggest one Alun Griffiths has ever taken on themselves, and Mr Cleary said there have been challenges along the way.

He said: "It is the biggest one we have done in our own name, others have been as a joint venture with others.

"The challenges have been trying to basically build a bypass on the site of a glacier valley, the topography has been difficult to do." The challenges for the Welsh Government have not been easy either.

Due to a campaign and petition to save the 600-year-old Brimmon Oak Tree, the bypass route had to be slightly altered.

Traffic congestion will be greatly reduced but there are other positives that have already benefited Newtown and the Powys area. Of the 250 workers on the ground at the peak of the construction project, 72 per cent are from Wales and 32 per cent of the workers are from Newtown and the Powys area. Other numbers regarding the work are equally impressive. In total, two-and-a-half million tons of earth is being dug up and moved around as part of the construction – enough to fill the Principality Stadium in Cardiff.

About 80,000 plants are being put in place to screen the bypass so that the impact on the surrounding scenery is minimal. Assembly Member Russell George said he was delighted with the progress made.

He said: "I am just very pleased that the bypass is on schedule, and with some good weather it could be finished ahead of time. It is great to see that some of the bridges are already built and the big structure up Dolfor Road is coming on well."

WORKING FOR YOU



2017 was politically turbulent at Westminster. The driver of this turbulence was the General Election in June which produced a hung parliament. As with all such parliaments, this meant two or more parties seeking an agreement to form a Government. The Conservatives and the Democratic Unionist Party, after much debate, came to what amounts to a confidence and supply plus agreement, which has proved to be very stable.

Personally, the General Election was very much a mixed bag. It was disappointing that the Conservative Party lost its overall majority, but in Montgomeryshire, it was a success beyond our wildest dreams. After more than a century of almost always coming second, Montgomeryshire is now the safest Conservative parliamentary seat in Wales, with a majority nearing 10,000. The Conservatives also enjoyed great success in the elections to Powys County Council in May. Not many years ago, there had not been any Conservative Councillors ever. Since May, there have been 14, and the party has joined with an Independent Group to run Powys County Council. The Council cabinet have an incredibly difficult job ahead of them, restricted by a dreadful financial settlement from the Welsh Government.

2017 has been a very good year for our local economy. Unemployment has fallen to levels lower than I've ever known. The hugely important Newtown Bypass will probably open in 2018, opening up the towns of Machynlleth and Llanidloes to benefit from any Mid Wales Growth Deal.

The next major transport developments must be a new Dyfi Bridge and a new A458 road from Welshpool to beyond Mid-dleton. The contentious Brexit debate, and my work in the Wales Office with the Secretary of State, Alun Cairns and Minister, Guto Bebb has been relentless. But I know it's important for Montgomeryshire, which is why I'm so committed to doing my best. I'm also hugely supportive of the Prime Minister, who has ignored the appalling way she has been treated over recent months, but has won great respect for her sense of duty and dedication. And she has delivered, despite so many talking down our great nation and willing her to fail. 2018 will be another very challenging year, but I really do think we can be optimistic about the future for Montgomeryshire, Wales and the United Kingdom.

Glyn Davies
Montgomeryshire MP

IF I GO TO PRISON WILL MY CHILDREN BE ABLE TO VISIT ME?

Q: I am due in court next month and the way things are looking I am worried that I may end up going to prison. As I've never been in a prison before I don't know what to expect. I'm especially worried about the effects it will have on my children. Will they be able to visit me in prison? And if they can visit me will they have to go through things like being searched? What will happen if they get upset or bored, will it mean my partner will have to cut short the visit?

A: You don't need to worry about losing contact with your children as they will be able to visit you. The only time they would not be allowed to visit is if you are deemed to present a potential risk to them.

When they visit they will have to stay with the adult that brings them at all times and they must be kept under control. Babies and young children do not normally need to be named on the Visiting Order, nor do they need independent identification, but you should get this confirmed by the individual prison. Pushchairs and carry cots are normally not allowed inside the prison.

All visitors, even babies, are subject to search. Children and female visitors will usually receive just a 'rub down' by a female prison officer. If one of your children is a baby, most prisons will allow you to hold him or her. It would be advisable for there to be two visiting adults if the children are very young, so that one of them can take the children out of the Visit Room if they become bored or fractious.

Further information relating to this question is available from Emma Simoes, a Partner with GHP Legal. For an appointment visit www.ghplegal.com or contact one of our offices: Oswestry 01691 659194, Chirk 01691 777949, Wrexham 01978 291456, Llangollen 01978 860313. We offer free legal diagnostic clinics (no appointment necessary). In Oswestry, Wednesdays 12noon-3pm for Personal Injury, Employment & Family matters. In Wrexham, Mondays 9.30am-12noon for Employment matters, 12noon-3pm for Personal Injury & Family matters. GHP Legal is authorised and regulated by the SRA 51566, and Lexcel Accredited.

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Letters

What is the real cost of nursery care?

IS it not possible for statistics coming in from the Government and other authorities to be made so simple and clear that everyone from young teenagers to those in their hundreds can understand the real cost of a service, the real money available to the service provider, the real deficits, if any etc?

Here's a very simplified way, with made-up figures and it applies to an average cost - definitely fiction not fact, just an

illustration. Cost of a free placement in an approved pre-school nursery offering full cover, every day, not just in school terms. £100 per day to meet required high standards.

£80 per day Government grant.
£20 per day deficit.

So is the Government really giving free places?

This is happening across the board. Saying "we will put in £10 billion over the

next five years" is meaningless. We need to know:

* Average cost per head to meet the high standards.

* The average money given by Government per head to meet the high standards.

* What is the deficit?

* To get to, let alone keep the required standards, how will the gap be filled?

BA FLOWERS
Newport

Take a leaf out of Doddy's book and get common sense

THE Common Sense Party, the CSP the way forward, would like to take this opportunity to celebrate our greatest living Briton, Ken Dodd.

Even as our poll ratings slump lower than a snake in a cart track we cannot ignore the great man's 90th birthday. Where would this great country of ours be without such Doddyisms as: "What a beautiful day, what a beautiful day for running up to the vicarage front door, shoving a cucumber through it and shouting the Martians have landed?" Why haven't the government taken him along to all the Brexit negotiations? If anyone looks like they could do with a laugh it's that man from Luxembourg, Mr Juncker. Can anyone name a comedian from Luxembourg? Is there anything remotely funny about Luxembourg?

So here are some proposals for putting the smile back into the UK that I have been working on while sitting here in Belmarsh Prison.

Wonderful Land by The Shadows to be played on the radio more often.

No more inaccurate live TV reporting with inferior information, sound, pictures and someone waving their arms around.

No one with whitened teeth to be allowed on TV.

The word Brexit should be made illegal and replaced with Banana. Hence departing the EU to be referred to as the Banana negotiations.

Get to know your British history, there have been worse times.

PETER STEGGLES
Longnor

Call for reality check on debts

IT'S time for a reality check.

The Armed Forces are being starved of funds.

Meanwhile this year alone more than £13 billion is being borrowed to send to countries overseas.

The electrification of mainline railway routes is being postponed at the same time as at least £52bn will have to be borrowed for HS2.

The National Health Service cries out for money.

Meanwhile another £20bn or more will have to be borrowed to pay off the EU.

A staggering further £48bn will need to be borrowed in the current financial year to meet the interest charges on the National Debt, itself now more than double the £800bn it was in 2010.

What these figures demonstrate is a scarcely credible level of fiscal incontinence for which the long-suffering British taxpayer must ultimately pick up the tab.

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Nurses celebrate together in 1970s style



Nurses from the Oswestry district at their party in January 1972. From left: Margaret McConville, Mary Dulson, Marion Steele, Madge Griffiths, Margaret Thomas, and Mena Lewis.

Take care of your own great wonder – the human body

I REMEMBER as a youngster travelling into a Welsh valley and staring with awe and wonder at the towering mountainsides.

In a busy workaday world it's easy to be caught in the mundane hustle and noise to lose our sense of wonder. Have you ever noticed a young child stare wide eyed at a dog or cat and cry out in pleasure? Many city dwellers like to get out into the country to just gaze at the beauty of the autumn colours, and of course there are also man-made wonders like the Iron Bridge and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and mobile phones. But have you ever stopped to think that YOU are a wonder, your body I mean. Eat a few sandwiches and it turns it into energy to walk miles. The digestive system is capable of turning a vast variety of foods which sustain people. Your body has about 70,000 miles of blood vessels. With the right training your body can perform incredible actions, just watch a gymnast. So remember you are a wonder, love yourself and take good care of that body.

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People of all ages ran the course at the visitor attraction



Pam Lloyd, Sue Austin, Demi Williams, Bev Larkins and Lou Williams were ready for the run challenge



Faz Solaymam eyes up the festive event



Katy Cottrell sparked as a Christmas tree

Colourful costumes bring festive cheer

FUNDRAISING runners pulled out all the stops to ensure a festive fun run went down a treat at the weekend.

The event was held at the British Ironwork Centre at Aston near Oswestry and was organised by Ashling Donohoe-Harrison, 32, and Victoria Hall, 38.

The pair organised the fundraiser as part of their money-spinning efforts for next year's London Marathon.

The pair are running the marathon in aid of Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital in Gobowen, where they both work.

Ashling said: "We are both runners but

Report by Aimee Jones

we've only done a half marathon before so I'm excited. Now the fundraising is all sorted I'm starting to think more about all the miles I'm going to have to run."

They've also hosted a quiz night and sold homemade festive gifts, and both women have now raised £1,500 for the hospital.

The sold-out fun run on Sunday saw 175 runners complete a three kilometre course around the popular tourist attraction which was decorated ready for Christmas.

And it was not just the site itself which had a strong Christmas theme.

Many of the runners took time to dress up in their festive best to ensure there was as much fun at the fun run as possible.

There were more than a few Father Christmases darting around the course at the visitor attraction and even one or two Christmas puddings were spotted.

It may have been a December day but plenty of the runners donned festive sunglasses to brighten up proceedings.

A few reindeer were spotted on the course too while there was a smattering of elves around.

And going above and beyond in the festive fashion stakes was Katy Cottrell who ran the race dressed up as a Christmas tree.



Jenny West and Claire Sumner limber up

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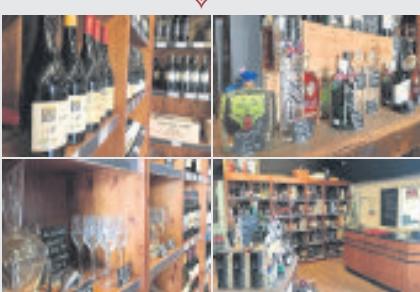


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Key staff to stand down from roles with canal

THIS year marks the end of an era for the Canal & River Trust's North Wales and Borders Waterway with the retirement of three key staff.

Collectively the three staff members have notched up nearly a century of service to the canals.

Waterway manager Wendy Capelle, who is based in the charity's Northwich office, is due to leave this month after 18 years of service, with her departure happening just before her 60th birthday on Christmas Day.

Howard Griffiths, 59, has just retired as the trust's customer service supervisor for the Llangollen and Montgomery canals.

Based out of the Ellesmere office, he has lived all his life on the Montgomery Canal.

Howard has mixed work and pleasure in a career spanning 39 years caring for his local waterways.

His father was also a canalman for 24 years.

Howard has remarkably spent his entire life living in the same lock keeper's cottage at Aston Locks, near Oswestry, where he was born, raised, married and brought up four daughters of his own.

Neville Preece, 62, who will retire in early 2018, is the supervisor for the southern section of the Shropshire Union Canal.

He is based out of Norbury.

He first started working on the waterways 41 years ago as part of the dredging fleet on the River Weaver Navigation.

It was then still used by commercial cargo vessels.

Over the years he has taken on a number of roles from length foreman and harbour master to a supervisor in Chester.

Report by Jordan Reynolds

WEST Mercia Police force has been told it requires improvement after an inspection.

The force, which covers Shropshire, was told that more work was needed on how it keeps people safe and reduces crime.

The judgement came as part of annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy across England and Wales by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

The force was told it required improvement across three areas – treating the people it serves with fairness and respect, ensuring its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully, and aspects of treating its workforce with fairness and respect.

Responding to the findings, Assistant Chief Constable Martin Evans, of West Mercia Police, said: "While we are disappointed with the 'requires improvement' rating, the report does recognise that much good work has already been done in the vital areas of policing it covers.

"We are committed to treating people with fairness, ensuring we act ethically and lawfully and treating our workforce with fairness and respect. We will use the findings of the report to ensure that we build on the progress already made in these areas and continue to improve." The report says that leaders need to provide the workforce with training so the force acts fairly. It says: "Although leaders clearly demonstrate that they understand and value the benefits of procedural justice, they need to provide the workforce with training so the force acts fairly, treats people with respect and communicates effectively."

Inspectors tell police force it must improve

AM backs hair and beauty industry



Russell George with ISA Training's chief executive Shirley Davis-Fox

THE Assembly Member for Montgomeryshire, Russell George, has welcomed new research which reveals that hair and beauty salons contribute up to £283 million a year to the Welsh economy and employ 11,000 people.

Mr George attended a reception at the Senedd in Cardiff when ISA Training, the largest independent hair and beauty training provider in Wales, launched the economic impact assessment report.

ISA Training's chief executive Shirley Davis-Fox said the report ought to be essential reading for politicians and called on the Welsh Government to make hair and beauty a priority sector.

Mr George said: "This important research has challenged the misconceptions surrounding this profession and has highlighted the true economic value and impact of the hair and beauty sector to Wales. With over 2400 businesses employing almost 11,000 people, the sector contributes £283 million to the Welsh economy, is a key employer and, unlike many service and retail sectors, it guarantees that money earned in a locality is spent and retained in Wales. For too long, this sector has been undervalued".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Video shows life of town in 1960s

COLOUR footage has emerged of what Welshpool was like in the 1960s.

Videos have emerged online, giving residents a taste of what things were like in the town 54 years ago.

The 90-second video clip shows a train running from the Raven Roundabout and down the back road on its original track towards the Old Smithfield.

The film was found by a Welshpool resident who shared it on social media, and was discovered in the BFI archives.

The caption with the film says: "In this film by William Arthur 'Cam' Camwell, we see one of the original W&L locomotives with train of volunteers as they cross the level crossing and take a winding trip into the town section."

New awards will recognise care

A POLICE force is celebrating the work of its officers and staff with the launch of #WeCare award.

Dyfed-Powys Police is in need of the public's help and want people who have come into contact with the force to nominate individuals who have gone above and beyond to provide exceptional care and support.

This could range from a police officer who has kept a victim updated on the progress of an investigation or a family liaison officer who has supported a family during tragic times, to a schools officer who has helped youngsters deal with difficult issues.

The award also extends to members of staff who have proved to be invaluable to community groups, from helping to run safety campaigns or providing reassurance at Pact meetings. Nominations can be emailed to AnnualAwards@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk

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NEWS IN BRIEF**Ding Dong ale hits market**

A MID Wales brewery has created a Christmas ale, which is selling in a host of Co-op stores across the UK.

Monty's Brewery, based in Montgomery, has come up with the Ding Dong ale, which adds to products already sold in the Co-op, such as Sun-shine and Moonrise.

The new product will be in around 100 Co-op stores this Christmas.

Pam Honeyman, co-founder of Monty's Brewery and head Brewer, explained: "Ding Dong is a golden, light ale."

"We were keen to brew a Christmas beer that is not over-powering, and is ideal for the home market and gifts."

Backing given to plastic campaign

A CAMPAIGN to rid Powys of plastic has been backed by a councillor.

Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick, cabinet member for highways at Powys County Council, gave his support to the Plastic Free Powys campaign that was launched earlier this month.

He said: "I'm very lucky to travel this county every week, checking roads and talking to people about our communities and neighbourhoods."

The councillor added: "However, it depresses me daily to see our beautiful countryside covered in litter and plastic debris from burger cartons, food trays and plastic drink containers and bottles."

"It's all unnecessary and starts in our food stores, supermarkets and shops and that is why I attended the launch of the 'Plastic Free Powys' campaign."

Objections aired to key renewable energy plan

Report by Jonny Drury

A NUMBER of objections have been made to renewable energy changes in the latest consultation on a controversial Local Development Plan.

A host of rounds of consultations have already taken place into the LDP, which has caused a stir among objectors to renewable energy in Powys.

The process of the latest development plan began in 2010 before a revised version was put forward in 2013. Now the council is attempting to finalise its plans on the future of housing, infrastructure, energy and other topics. The latest round of consultations showed 740 responses from across the county, with some objectors unhappy with the housing plans outlined.

Comments included questioning why there has been a reduction in the number of affordable homes being offered. One objector said: "A significant increase in housing provision is required in order to provide the affordable housing needed."

Objectors from Montgomery near Welshpool were concerned about plans which would see 300 homes earmarked for land in the town, and they believe there isn't the infrastructure to deal with the development. A key feature of the LDP over previous years has been the inclusion of solar and wind energy.

Despite a reduction in the proposed size of the developments, some residents say they remain unhappy with the plans.

Campaigners meet MP over asylum



The campaigners with Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies in Parliament

MEMBERS of Mid Wales Refugee Action have met Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies in Parliament to campaign for a more humane asylum system.

The day-long #DignityNotDetention event was hosted by Bristol West MP Thangam Debbonaire, chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees (APPGR).

More than 200 people attended including refugee testimonies, poetry readings by primary school students and opportunities for MPs to meet with those seeking safety.

Campaigners are seeking support from MPs for amendments to a new Immigration Act including permission to work being granted to any person seeking asylum that has been waiting for longer than six months. Campaigner Kim Bryan said: "Our MP expressed openness towards the crucial issue of asylum seekers right to work and agreed to bring the issue to the immigration minister, Brandon Lewis, during the next weeks". Campaigner Giulio Mescia said the group's lobbying would continue.

Alert over scam which targets fake bank crime

CONSUMERS should be alert to a scam in which criminals pose as police officers and ask their victims to take part in a fake undercover operation.

Dyfed-Powys Police said fraudsters are contacting members of the public, usually by phone, claiming to be from the police, or in some cases the fraud team within their bank.

The criminal claims they are investigating a fraud at a local bank branch where staff are suspected of being complicit, including issuing fake bank notes, and asks their target to help in the operation.

As part of the scam, the individual is requested to visit the branch and withdraw a substantial sum, often thousands of pounds, of the supposedly counterfeit cash to hand over to the 'police for analysis'. The victim is assured that the money will be deposited back into their account after the operation is complete. However, once the money is passed over the fraudster disappears with the cash.

Paul Callard, financial crime team manager for Dyfed-Powys Police, said: "This scam has targeted individuals in our force area and we've actually received a report from a female victim in her 70s from Crickhowell, who was conned out of almost £15,000."

"The victim was able to get the initial £5,000 back from the victims bank however has not been able to get the other £9,638.16 back. Scams like these have such a negative impact on victims. I would urge people to please act with caution if approached by these types of scamsters. If in doubt, hang up and ring police on 101."

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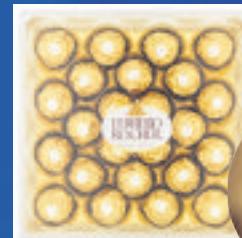
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Football camps at town school

A FORMER Shrewsbury Town and Newtown footballer is holding football camps in Oswestry in the New Year.

Callum Wright will be holding The Wright Way soccer camps at Oswestry School.

The football camps will take place on January 4 and 5, the organisers have said.

They will run between 10am and 3pm, and the cost is £15 to attend the camps.

The camps are for boys and girls aged between five and 12.

Participants are asked to bring warm clothes, lunch, a water bottle, shin pads and trainers.

To book a place call 07814 499125 or e-mail callum@thewrightwaygroup.co.uk.

Scenic walks are set to be surveyed

SURVEYING works on a series of walking routes in north Powys will be carried out by the local authority.

Powys County Council's Countryside Services Team will be resurveying tracks using public rights of way in the Dyfi Valley and would like to hear from volunteers interested in helping with the surveys.

Three years ago, the countryside services team and Natural Resources Wales finished opening up the walking routes in the Dyfi Valley as part of a project called 'Darganfod Dyfi' or 'Explore Dyfi'. The project included neighbouring counties of Ceredigion and Gwynedd in the lower Dyfi Valley, roughly centred around Machynlleth.

There are five walks in Powys ranging in length from under four miles up to seven miles.

Email rightsofway@powys.gov.uk for more details.

Report by Jonny Drury

A COUNCIL'S adult services will go under the microscope just months after a scathing review into children's services.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales will visit Powys County Council soon, the first inspection into the adult services since 2015.

The inspections will come just a few months after the council was told it needed to vastly improve its children's services, after a report found that youngsters were being put at risk.

Last month it was revealed the Welsh Government was discussing a support package to help the council turn the situation around. Now the local authority has received notification from the inspectorate that it will be returning in January with feedback provided later in the year.

Council leader Rosemarie Harris said: "The council was due an inspection of its adult service next summer but was expecting an earlier visit following comments in the wake of the children services inspection recommendations.

Whilst inspections can be daunting for staff and elected members they are a valuable tool for service improvement. The 2015 inspection, which followed concerns surrounding changes to our domiciliary care service, was insightful and provided helpful advice to improve the way we manage and deliver service to our residents."

Cabinet member for adult services, Councillor Stephen Hayes, added: "Inspections provide us with the opportunity to test the effectiveness of our services and provide us with valuable information about areas where we need to strengthen operations."

Appeal to help 'hidden homeless'



Gemma Cassin at Chalk is appealing for items to help homeless people

AN urgent appeal has been launched for blankets and sleeping bags to help Oswestry's "hidden homeless".

Men and women are facing biting winds and sub zero temperatures with only cars, tents, ramshackle buildings, or even alleyways, to protect them.

The community interest company Chalk says the scale of the problem is not fully appreciated.

Gemma Cassin from Chalk revealed that volunteers work behind the scenes to help those who either do not have a roof over their heads or are living in unheated houses. She said: "There are plenty of people who have to make the choice between food or warmth and do not heat their homes. We know of people who are sleeping in their cars or in makeshift shelters in Oswestry.

"Items like flasks, handwarmers and anything else that can help those with no heating will make a difference."

Anyone who has spare bedding and other items can drop them off at Chalk's two shops in Oswestry, both on Leg Street.

The organisation is currently organising its fourth Christmas Day lunch, which will be held at The Centre in Oak Street between 10am and 2pm.

Councillors make call for new inquiry over 'failures'

AN independent probe needs to be launched into the "failures" of a children's services department that was criticised by inspectors, it has been claimed.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales produced a damning report on the service at Powys County Council, saying that children had been put at serious risk of harm. Now the three leaders of the opposition groups on the council have demanded that a root and branch investigation is launched into the way the Independent/Conservative coalition-run council has been managed at senior level. Welsh Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Councillor James Gibson-Watt said: "The inspectors made it clear that the failures in children's services lay not with the social work staff delivering services to vulnerable children and young people and their families, but at political and corporate leadership levels."

In response, Council Leader Rosemarie Harris, Leader of Powys County Council, said: "The Welsh Government has agreed for Sean Harris to undertake a scoping review as part of a phased package of support and he has started this review work. Sean is a highly experienced former local government chief executive and we are confident that he can bring a different perspective to the challenges our council faces and add real value to the work which is already underway.

"The review will also provide an external assessment of all the council's corporate plans to ensure they are properly focussed and deliverable. It will look at a range of our supporting processes, services and frameworks to ensure we can deliver on our priorities."

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Support for consumers locked into cash deals

POWYS County Council is backing a campaign which offers support to people who are locked into a subscription for an offer they didn't sign up for.

An estimated two million people across the UK still experience issues cancelling recurring payments for subscriptions without their apparent authorisation.

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) has released two video animation guides for consumers, businesses and financial institutions on subscription issues.

The first animation is aimed at businesses who offer subscriptions to their customers. Whether selling gym memberships, health or beauty products, streaming services or periodic subscriptions, all businesses must follow a strict set of laws designed to protect consumers from unfair practices.

The second animation gives practical advice for consumers to make them think before they sign and not be tempted by free trial offers.

If consumers find themselves caught in a trap then banks need to be aware of their responsibilities to customers struggling with subscription issues.

The move is being supported by Powys County Council.

Councillor Jonathan Wilkinson, Powys County Council's cabinet member for trading standards, said: "Our trading standards teams are keen to help banks and financial institutions ensure their customers are protected from subscriptions issues.

"Continued payment authorities can cause serious debt problems for consumers when left unmonitored, and we hope businesses ensure their terms and conditions are clear and transparent."

CTSI chief executive Leon Livermore said: "Raising awareness of the issues facing consumers is key to tackling consumer detriment."

Child burial fees scrapped in Wales

BURIAL and cremation fees for children who have died in Wales have been scrapped.

Grieving parents will no longer have to pay fees, after a memorandum of understanding with local authorities was signed to stop charging for the burial of children.

The government has pledged to make £1.5 million available between now and 2020, to support the local authorities in making the change. The move has come following a campaign by Labour MP Carolyn Harries, who lost her son Martin at the age of eight.

Plans to transform services revealed

PLANS to transform the way Powys County Council's highways, transport and recycling service operate have been unveiled.

The programme is being developed as an alternative to establishing a "wholly owned company" to deliver the services on behalf of the county council.

A commissioning board – set up to investigate the feasibility of a wholly owned company operating on behalf of the council – decided that the services would continue to be delivered in-house but would change in the way they are currently operated.

It is the intention to make the service more commercial and flexible

while reducing the overall cost of running the service.

Councillor Phyl Davies, cabinet member for property and waste, and councillor Liam Fitzpatrick, cabinet member for highways, said: "We are determined to create a service that is capable of delivering services our residents want within available resources.

"We don't underestimate the scale of the programme before us but we are confident with commitment from the whole council we will transform the service."

"The transformation will take time but we are prepared to take a long-term view in order to create the sort of service we want."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Over 65s urged to have flu jabs

PUBLIC Health Wales is reminding people over the age of 65 they are at more risk of complications if they catch flu than the general population.

The organisation is promoting its campaign to make people more aware of having their flu vaccinations and have warned older people they are more likely to encounter problems if they don't have the jab.

Ann Williams from Llanfyllin, and chair of Llanfyllin Medical Practice Patient Participation Group, has added her support to this year's campaign.

She said: "I have had my free annual flu vaccination and I would encourage everyone over 65 to do the same."

"As we get older our immune system may not work as well, which makes older people more at risk of serious illness if they get flu."

"Everyone aged 65 and over can have a free annual flu vaccination from their GP practice and from participating pharmacies."

£22,000 is given to sports groups

MORE than £22,000 has been handed out to more than a dozen sport organisations across Powys.

Sport and leisure groups are being urged by Powys County Council's sports development team to apply for a grant worth up to £1,500 to help clubs thrive.

The grants are designed to make a difference to sport and physical activity locally and are available through the Sportlot Community Chest, the Sports Council for Wales National Lottery funded grant aid scheme.

Councillor Rachel Powell, cabinet member for sports development, said: "I'm delighted that we have been able to award these grants to 15 clubs, which will help them thrive and make a difference to sport and physical activity in their area."

"With £90,000 available for this financial year, I'm urging organisations to submit applications so they don't miss out on this grant funding."

End of an era as Yolande retires

THE owner of a trophy shop is set to retire at Christmas after 31 years.

Yolande Breeze has run Mid Wales Trophies off Welshpool's Broad Street for over three decades, but is now calling time.

The shop in Boot Street will be taken over by James Watkins, who runs the nearby Rally Marketing shop.

Mrs Breeze took to social media to thank her loyal customers.

She said: "After over 31 years of operating Mid Wales Trophies and Engraving I have decided it's time to retire but the good news is it will be business as usual at The Studio in Boot Street, Welshpool."

Big drop in number of children arrested

Report by Lisa O'Brien

THE number of children arrested by police in West Mercia has fallen by 77 per cent since 2010, new figures have revealed.

The statistics show that the police force, which covers Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, made 1,247 child arrests in 2016.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic children accounted for 14 per cent (175) of all child arrests by West Mercia Police last year, which was significantly below the national average of 26 per cent.

Across England and Wales, police forces made fewer than 88,000 arrests of children in total last year – down from almost 250,000 in 2010. BAME children accounted for 26 per cent of all child arrests.

The figures were obtained by the national charity Howard League for Penal Reform through a freedom of information request.

West Mercia Police Deputy Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman said: "West Mercia Police seeks to protect all members of its communities from harm and we aim to treat everyone fairly and with respect, regardless of background or age."

Allegations

"When investigating allegations involving any young person we aim to strike a careful balance between arriving at the right outcome for the victim whilst ensuring that any arrest that is made as part of the investigation is only made if it is absolutely necessary."

"The total number of arrests of children by West Mercia Police has fallen by 77 per cent since 2010 as our officers seek to ensure a proportionate approach is taken in response to allegations."

"We recognise that the police should not seek to criminalise young people unnecessarily as can be seen by the reduction in arrests we have made."

"We take the issues raised seriously and we are not complacent. We are continually looking to improve our service to our communities, including our approach to dealing with incidents involving children and young people and we will continue to strive to continuously improve and use best practice from other forces."

College staff help food bank's work



Rosemary Dorse, Matt Selfe, Carol Meadows, Marie-Ann Preston and Madhukesh Loomba with donations

NORTH Shropshire College staff have been busy collecting donations for the Oswestry and Borders food bank over the festive period.

tions from business, local schools, churches, and the general public to ensure that it can continue to provide such a critical service, especially over the busy winter season.

Rosemary Dorse, examinations administrator at the college, who helped to organise the donations and their recent handover to the food bank, said: "We are delighted by the support that we have received from staff at the college, and

would like to thank them for their contributions."

"We are grateful that we are able to give back something to the community that has supported the college over the years, and hope that we can continue to do so in the future."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Students speak out at competition

ANOREXIA, IVF and the ethics of transplants were some of the topics explored at a public speaking competition.

Moreton Hall School at Gledrid near Oswestry hosted the Rotary Youth Speaks District Round of the national competition and saw its intermediate team progress to the district area finals.

Head of spoken English, Merriel Halsall-Williams, said: "The students all worked very hard and performed exceptionally well on the day."

"They were a great credit to themselves and should be very proud."

"The intermediate team spoke on the topic of anorexia eloquently and confidently."

"They now progress through to the district area finals on March 2 at the Catrin Finch Centre, Glyndwr University."

Youngsters have their say on future

OVER 100 young people came together from across Mid Wales to talk about their health and well-being for the future.

The 'Have Your Say Day' event took place in Llandrindod Wells on Universal Children's Day which celebrates Children's Rights across the world and promotes the improvement of child welfare. Deputy Leader of Powys County Council Aled Davies said: "It was fantastic to see so many young people from across the county come together to discuss what is important to them. It's crucial that we hear the views of young people and that these help us shape priorities and change across public services."

Memorial bench installed at hospital in honour to Woody

A FORMER maintenance assistant at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital has been remembered with a memorial bench.

Terry Wood, commonly known as Woody, started working at the hospital back in December 2005, but died in September after a battle with illness.

The estates department at the hospital decided to have a bench installed in his memory, with staff members raising £350.

In addition to that funding, electrician Rob Adams and the Peter Pan Nursery held a cake sale which raised a further £310.

Mr Wood's widow Janet, his daughter Tina Bache and his son Carl all attended the unveiling to pay tribute along with his four grandchildren - Keeley and Summer Bache and Lucas and Jadien Wood.

Mrs Bache said: "Dad would be so overwhelmed and touched on how all of his work friends have come together and remembered him in such a lovely way."

"We, as a family, will visit dad's bench and sit and think of all the wonderful memories we have of him."

Mrs Bache added: "I want to thank all of Terry's work colleagues for their kind donations that have contributed towards the beautiful bench."

"It has been so touching to know how much he meant to them all."

Estates officer Simon Everett, along with many of Mr Wood's colleagues, also paid tribute.

Simon said: "We were absolutely



Workers and family members at the dedication of the bench to Terry Wood at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital

devastated to hear that Woody had passed away.

"He was such a well-loved member of the estates team who everyone across the hospital knew and valued.

"It only seemed right we remembered him somehow and when the guys in the workshop suggested a remembrance bench it was perfect."

Plea made for urgent action over broadband

ANOTHER debate on broadband speeds in Mid Wales has taken place in the National Assembly after repeated calls for improvements to be made.

Earlier this year, the National Assembly's economy, infrastructure and skills committee conducted an inquiry to consider the barriers to broadband and mobile connectivity.

It looked at the innovative steps which the Welsh Government can take to resolve ongoing connectivity issues across the country, particularly in rural Wales.

Montgomeryshire AM Russell George led the debate and believes it is essential people are not "left in the lurch" when it comes to broadband speeds.

He said: "The committee's recommendations will help Wales to develop a digital infrastructure which is fast, reliable and fit for the future so I was pleased that the Welsh Government broadly accepted our proposals. But it's now action which is required from the Government."

Among the recommendations, the committee calls on the Welsh Government to consider ways to connect the last four per cent of Wales who remain without broadband access, and to improve mobile phone coverage across the country. While it is good news that more and more people are getting connected at increasingly high speeds, a consequence of this improvement is that a frustration and a sense of injustice grows in those left behind. It is essential that people are not left in the lurch."

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Emma helps draw up new guidelines

Report by Jonny Drury

AN orthotist at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital is celebrating after reaching the end of a two-year project to help create guidelines that will standardise clinical practice nationally.

Emma Bonnick, senior orthotist, was one of three orthotists commissioned by the British Association of Prosthetists & Orthotists to run a series of spinal bracing surveys to reveal spinal bracing clinical practice across the UK, with the aim of improving current practices for patients.

The main findings of the study were that practice was not consistent between orthotists across the country.

Following on from this, the aim was to develop national trauma spinal bracing guidelines using evidence-based findings to give recommendations as to the type of spinal brace to use to stabilise each level and type of spinal injury.

Ms Bonnick has spent the past two years on the project, alongside Helen Walker, lead orthotist at Wirral University Teaching Hospital - formerly a member of staff - and Jonathan Tebbutt, lead orthotist at Hywel Dda - the health board for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

She said: "I feel incredibly proud that we've completed these guidelines. It's been two years of extremely hard work but I always knew how worthwhile this would be because it would mean there would be a gold



Emma Bonnick and Jane Dewsbury with a spinal brace

standard of standardised practice and that's important because there are no guidelines currently set out to help orthotists with decision making regarding patients with spinal injuries."

As it stands the guidelines are currently going through copyrighting ahead of them being published.

Jane Dewsbury, principal orthotist, said: "I'm immensely proud of the dedication Emma has shown to helping produce these guidelines."

Councillors offer different opinions on whether 20mph zone would work in town

COUNCILLORS have clashed over whether Oswestry should be turned into a 20mph zone to prevent accidents.

In November a public meeting in Shrewsbury of a campaign called '20 is Plenty,' was held.

The meeting looked at moves to turn Shropshire towns into 20mph zones.

The meeting heard representations from people around the county.

Voices from Oswestry were heard about the potential to turn the centre of the market town into a 20mph zone.

The meeting in November heard arguments for both sides.

And Oswestry Town Councillors had their say on the matter at their latest meeting on Monday evening.

Report by Jonny Drury

Councillor Duncan Kerr said he was a supporter of the plans.

He again backed the initiative arguing it would help keep people safe in the town.

The councillor said that also by changing zones to 20mph it would reduce pollution.

He said: "If someone is hit at 20 then they could survive, at 30 it is more likely they will die."

"This is the most cost effective way of dealing with this."

"Many people in 20mph zones have said how good it is, for health reasons as more people find it safer to walk and for the economy."

However, Councillor Chris Schofield argued against the plans.

He said a recent story in another town in the country highlighted more accidents had been caused through the zones.

The councillor argued it was a substantial cost to change the system back.

Councillors were split on the idea, as Councillor John Price said: "It all comes down to due care and attention."

"Accidents will happen at any speed, whether that is 5mph, 20mph or 30mph."

Shropshire Council is against the plans, the meeting was told, as were other councillors in Monday evening's meeting.

Councillor Peter Cherrington argued that money could be used in a better way and ques-

tions whether speeding was a particular problem in Oswestry.

He said: "We could use this money better by adding zebra crossings to slow drivers down."

"I don't see speeding in the town as a major problem."

Councillors agreed to note the findings of the report, after Councillor Price added the only way to tackle speeding is by people simply using common sense.

He concluded: "We could say what about people in cars not wearing seat belts, and people driving on phones? They are problems. Signs would not make a difference, the only thing that would make a difference is common sense, but using the highway code and driving with due care and attention."

15 Oswestry & Border Chronicle Mayor hoping for movement on site plans

OSWESTRY'S mayor is calling on sites for two major developments to move forward.

Plans were previously in place for a retail park with a supermarket, cinema and restaurants on the former Smithfield site in Oswestry, however it has stood derelict for many years after plans were shelved.

Morrisons has a lease on the site, however it became an eyesore until the town council demanded action was taken by the supermarket chain, and it was tidied up this year.

Also plans have been long running for an Innovation Park at the town's Mile End roundabout, which could bring around 1,000 jobs.

Mayor Vince Hunt is hoping that things kick into action with both developments.

He said: "It goes without saying that we all want something to happen on both sides."

"We've had a little bit of movement this year and dialogue with Morrisons to get them to do something about the site. We have been in further contact and we would like to hope something happens next year."

"The Innovation Park is the same really, we hope something happens because it is massive for Oswestry and could bring thousands of jobs."

"It is just we are hopeful on both counts for the next year."

Businesses are reminded of waste rules

COUNCIL bosses are warning businesses they could face prosecution if they fail to follow commercial waste rules properly.

The reminder comes after failing to dispose of commercial waste properly cost a Welshpool business over £550 after it was prosecuted by Powys County Council.

Julia Cork, operator of Sun Kissed Salon in Welshpool, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act for failing to produce waste transfer notes. Magistrates heard that the council's waste enforcement officers started an investigation after they found waste disposed of inappropriately in Welshpool in January with evidence linking the waste to Sun Kissed Salon. The salon was issued with a legal notice from the council requesting written evidence to prove how they were disposing of their waste.

However, they were unable to produce the relevant documentation. Cllr Phyl Davies, cabinet member for waste and recycling, said: "Any waste or recycling produced by businesses is classed as commercial and they have a legal duty of care to store, transport and dispose of their commercial waste in a professional manner. It is not acceptable to illegally use the household service or worse to fly-tip the waste."

Police have new lead on tool fraud

OFFICERS leading an investigation into suspected factory tool fraud have revealed that one person has come forward following their appeal for information.

Businesses in Oswestry, Telford, Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth have reported being charged thousands of pounds for machine tools to be sharpened after being approached by two men offering the service.

They visited the Lindstrand Balloon factory in Oswestry offering to sharpen drill bits before returning the next day demanding cash. When the company refused to pay, the pair began hounding staff members by phone. Bosses at Baumatuk UK Ltd factory in Telford were charged £6,000 by two men who had initially offered to sharpen its precision tools for between £600 to £700.

The firm found the bill went up when the work was completed. The men were eventually paid £2,000 but the firm claimed it was bombarded with telephone calls from them demanding the rest of the cash.

The same men are suspected to have visited several businesses in the north east sparking a hunt for those responsible. In a statement Humbershire Police said: "This remains an ongoing inquiry at present. We have had someone come forward following the appeal and are pursuing further lines of inquiry."

Murder victim had 'Gordon Ramsey' persona, court told

Report by Aimee Jones

A DINER owner found dead with more than 40 stab wounds has been described as having a 'Gordon Ramsey-type' persona.

Satnam Singh Bligher, 67, was found on the kitchen floor of Tony's Diner in Halfway House, between Shrewsbury and Welshpool, by his son on June 26 this year.

Employee Belkar Singh, who was found with £47,000 in cash belonging to the victim, denies the murder.

At Stafford Crown Court on Tuesday, a jury heard a transcript of a phone call between Singh, 56, of Booth Street, Birmingham, and fellow employee Ram Gee in which the defendant revealed Bligher had been found dead.

Singh said: "Boss is no more. He is dead. There was blood everywhere."

Mr Gee told the jury he had no reason to suspect Singh killed their boss, who was known as "Mr B".

Speaking through a Punjabi interpreter, he said Singh was a small and friendly man who he became good friends with, and added that the victim was known for his temper.

Mr Gee said two men had left their jobs at the diner following rows with Mr Bligher.

Jo Sidhu, defending, told the court Mr Bligher had been likened to chef Gordon Ramsey because of his anger and said he had been involved in arguments with a number of employees and other people.

The jury also heard from a former chef at Tony's Diner, Vicky Walker, who said the victim had a disagreement with a neighbour and a builder shortly before his death.

She added: "He never shouted at me. My relationship with him was good."

"But he'd just had a disagreement with a builder who had done work for him and Mr B thought he'd been over-charged. They were disagreeing about money for further jobs he wanted doing."

"And a week before he died he spoke to the neighbours too about a row of conifer trees. He thought they should cut them but I just told him to speak to the council about it." The businessman was found by his son Hardeep on the kitchen floor on the afternoon of June 26 after concerns that no one had seen him. He had been stabbed and struck up to 50 times.

The prosecution alleges that Singh was motivated by greed and attacked the victim for money.

The trial continues.

Planned £18 million revamp of HQ wins backing



Shropshire Council's dated Shirehall base in Shrewsbury is set to be in line for an £18 million renovation under new plans

WORK to renovate Shropshire Council's headquarters could begin as early as the spring.

Members of the council's cabinet agreed in principle to the £18.7 million refurbishment of the outdated Shirehall in Shrewsbury.

Due diligence and a feasibility study will now be carried out – at a cost to the council of £300,000 although it has been awarded £150,000 from the Government for the scheme.

The council had considered vacating the site and relocating and rebuilding elsewhere but the costs were deemed to be too high.

It had also looked into the partial renovation of the building but it was felt this did not address a number of issues including heating, energy wastage and the building being unattractive to potential partners and external companies who may otherwise take up office space and thereby generate income.

Leader of the council, Councillor Peter Nutting, said he hoped the renovation work of the 1960s building, which he described as "tired", would be at the forefront of moving the council into a "new world".

According to Tim Smith, head of the council's business initiatives and commercial services, the work, which could start as early as

May, would take three years to complete. On completion there would be open plan work spaces, hot desking, and spaces which could be rented out to businesses or partners.

Councillor Nutting said that it is estimated that by attracting private and commercial partners to the refurbished building, the council would be able to generate approximately £2 million in revenue per year.

At the cabinet meeting, Councillor Roger Evans, Lib Dem leader of the opposition, said he was in favour of the renovations, adding: "I have long advocated for this. We should invest in this building. It will improve our finances and revenue."

'Our finances are under control' says council leader

SHROPSHIRE Council's leader Peter Nutting has reassured councillors that finances are under control, after they were branded a "catastrophe".

The authority has predicted that there will be a £5 million overspend this financial year, and as a result the council's cabinet voted to take action to tackle this, which includes a "spending freeze".

Liberal Democrat leader Roger Evans labelled the financial state "a catastrophe" and said he was concerned that the financial strat-

egy would not be debated until January. But Councillor Nutting has reassured councillors that savings have been, and continue to be, made.

In a reply to a written question from Councillor David Turner ahead of a full council meeting, he said: "The fundamental principles and underlying trends identified in the financial strategy have been consistent for a number of years. Savings have been, and continue to be, made and earmarked reserves have been freed up to protect, as far as possible, services that

are so valuable to our communities. The financial strategy comprises of projections which are refreshed and reviewed on a regular basis and reported, transparently, through to cabinet and council."

Councillor Nutting said that increased demand for social care, along with falling Government funding, have resulted in the funding gap.

But he insisted the council was taking action to address it. He said: "Increased demand for social care in children and adults alongside other pressures have escalated costs, and with

falling Government funding have increased the projected funding gap.

"As reported in the media, this is consistent with national trends and so this is not isolated to Shropshire.

"The issue of expenditure exceeding income remains and this cannot be sustained by 'one off' measures. We have been clear about this in the financial strategy and we have set out our approach to tackle this over the coming months. In short, we are taking action to address this."

16 MP welcomes latest figures on employment

GLYN Davies, Conservative MP for Montgomeryshire, has welcomed the latest unemployment figures for the county, continuing the record levels of employment within the constituency.

The Office of National Statistics released figures which show that in November, the number of claimants for Job Seekers Allowance in Montgomeryshire was 305. This represents just one per cent of the economically active population aged 16-64, well below the UK average claimant rate of 2.5 per cent. The number of claimants is down from 335 in October 2017, and is 75 lower than in November 2016.

There were also only 75 claimants aged 18-24 within the constituency, 25 lower than in November 2016.

Glyn Davies said: "The latest unemployment statistics for Montgomeryshire continue the record levels of employment within the constituency. The employment rate is staggeringly high, and is far higher than when I first became Montgomeryshire MP in 2010."

"Today, Montgomeryshire has the 73rd highest level of employment out of 650 constituencies across the UK. What's even more pleasing is that unemployment for those aged between 18-24 also continues to decrease, having fallen by a third from this time last year."

Changes to parking rules are mooted

A COUNCIL is considering moves to ensuring parking charges have a "consistent approach" across the county.

A report went before Powys County Council's cabinet, discussing changes to parking permits, dispensations, suspensions and fees.

It is proposed to have replacement permits made across the county with a charge of £25. The report also suggested adopting a charge of £15 per vehicle per day up to a maximum of two vehicles at any one time in council car parks.

Another proposed change is to have a charge of £330 to cover the consideration and creating and erecting of temporary parking suspension signs – including any site visits as necessary. Long stay car parks will also be hired out to assist an event, and will be set at the average daily income of the car park, plus an administration fee of £75. In addition to charging the daily rate for car per space in compounds, a £75 administration fee will also be payable.

The move is designed to give a consistent approach to parking across the county. It was recommended that the changes should be approved. However, the cabinet heard the report had not been seen by the scrutiny committee, and a decision was made to defer the report.

Deficit may take decade to clear

HEALTH bosses say it could be a decade before they manage to clear a £32.6 million deficit.

A finance and contract report was published ahead of Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) governing body meeting, which states that by the end of this financial year the CCG will have a £19.4 million in-year deficit.

The report says this totals a deficit of £32.6 million which has accumulated over previous years.

Shropshire CCG's accountable officer Simon Freeman said that the group hopes that the in-year deficit will be zero in three years. He said: "Our plan this year is to deliver our services. Our real focus is on returning the CCG to balance in year. We're having to save £18 million this year."

"We've got a number of major schemes to look at to save that money, one is GP prescriptions."

Freeman added: "It's about cutting out waste, stopping prescribing things we don't need to prescribe."

"That's going to save approximately £3-4 million this year."

"By three years we're hoping our in-year deficit will be zero."

"It could be a decade before the £32.6 million is cleared."

Time running out for sports organisations to claim a share of cash fund from housing group

YOUNG sporting individuals and clubs in the region are being urged to enter a funding scheme that gives them the chance to win £200,000 as the programme closes at the end of the year.

Persimmon Homes launched its Healthy Communities scheme in May.

Launched

The scheme was launched as part of a national initiative which aims to give away more than £600,000 in cash to sports groups and individuals.

Under the scheme, a host of regional prizes of £750 are up for grabs every month, with amateur sports teams and individuals aged 21 years and under eligible to apply.

Report by Jonny Drury

The money is to be spent on sports kit, equipment, coaching or facilities.

The scheme will close at the end of December with a shortlist of 30 drawn up in January from all the entries nationwide.

They will go forward to a national final to be decided on a public vote, with the winning club or individual receiving £200,000 while two runners-up will receive £50,000 each with 27 finalist awards of £5,000 each.

Persimmon Homes West Midlands, which has its headquarters in Wolverhampton, has chosen individuals and clubs from across their region, which covers Shropshire, Staffordshire

and the West Midlands, including Shrewsbury Juniors Under 14 girls, Gornal Athletic Mini Minor Kickers, a Stourbridge archer and a Cheadle trampolinist.

Director-in-charge Stephen Cleveley is now urging people to apply as there are only a few weeks left until the scheme closes.

He said: "Healthy Communities has been tremendously popular, and we have had some incredibly talented young people enter as well as dedicated clubs providing grassroots sport and opportunities for local people."

"This new programme is aimed at creating a lasting legacy for young people who love sport and the volunteers who help to deliver it."

"Everyone, regardless of whether they win a monthly prize, will be considered as a finalist.

"We are looking for sports teams and individuals who have amazing ideas on how to spend £200,000 to come forward."

"We will consider anything from new club houses, to training centres, facilities or gyms, or it may be people who want to spend the cash on the development of future Olympians."

Excited

"We're very excited to see the projects that are put forward."

To find out more or to enter Healthy Communities visit www.persimmonhomes.com/charity

Healthy Communities is in addition to the £720,000 Persimmon Homes already donates through its hugely successful Community Champions programme each year.

A&E targets are 'nowhere near where we want them'

Report by Mat Growcott

THE trust in charge of Shropshire's major hospitals has admitted its A&E performance "is nowhere near where we want it" after figures revealed waiting times were the second worst in the country for October.

Figures showed that only 73.3 per cent of patients at Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust's A&E departments had been seen within four hours – below the national target of 95 per cent and national average of 90 per cent.

In light of the figures bosses at the trust, which manages Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital Telford, have said that their top priority was to ensure patients were treated "safely and appropriately".

Sara Biffen, interim chief operating officer for the trust, said A&E departments at both the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and at Telford's Princess Royal Hospital were "under a great deal of pressure".

The figures come against the background of the trust's management arguing that proceeding with the Future Fit reorganisation of the hospitals is the best way to tackle the challenges faced by the organisation.

Ms Biffen advised those with minor illness or injuries to consider whether they really need to visit hospital.

"We know that our performance against the A&E target is nowhere near where we want it to be, but our first priority is to ensure our patients are treated safely and appropriately," she said.

"As we have said on many occasions, our A&E departments are under a great deal of pressure, dealing with increasing attendances and more and more complex conditions, such as respiratory problems, which mean more people are being admitted into our hospitals."

"We continue to work with our partners both in the NHS and in social care so that those patients who no longer need the specialist care we provide can leave our hospitals in a safe and timely manner."

Ms Biffen said there were more appropriate health services for those not suffering with conditions appropriate for A&E.

"We would ask people to think carefully before coming to A&E," she said.

"People suffering from minor illness or injuries can access more appropriate health services, allowing us to focus on those people with serious conditions."

Spot castle hidden among the picturesque hills



The majestic Chirk Castle can be seen in the North Wales skyline in this photo from Clive Potter, a walking blogger and photographer

THE grand structure of Chirk Castle was captured from a different perspective by a photographer recently.

The castle near the North Wales town was photographed by walking blogger and photographer Clive Potter on a recent visit to the

area. He photographed the castle from above the site of the Battle of Crogen, which took place in 1165 in the Ceiriog Valley.

The battle saw the forces of Henry II of England take on an alliance of Welsh princes led by Owain Gwynedd.

The Welsh side came out on top, and some sources reported that the adverse weather conditions played a major part in Henry II's defeat.

Mr Potter visited the grounds of the battle to take the long distance picture of the castle.

Theatre will be staging extra pantomime performances

THEATRE bosses have scheduled two extra performances of their hit show, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs on January 3 and 4 after disgruntled panto ticket holders were not able to attend due to the weather.

A number of people, including some from the Oswestry area, took the decision not to go to the afternoon and evening performances of the sell-out show at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn on December 10 due to heavy snowfall.

But the shows went ahead – with more than 600 people enjoying both performances.

Craig Reeves, Theatre Severn spokesman said: "We are pleased to confirm that two additional performances have now been scheduled to accommodate ticket-holders who were unable to attend due to adverse weather conditions."

"Following the decision to proceed with performances for those who could attend, Theatre Severn and Evolution Productions also began to explore options for those who may be unable to do so."

"Due to very limited availability on forthcoming performances, we were unable to offer

immediate ticket exchanges, and quickly prioritised discussions around scheduling extra performances."

"With much to discuss and resolve during a developing situation, we regret that we were not able to speculate publicly upon potential solutions for those ticketholders at an earlier stage."

"After exploring all options, additional performances have now been scheduled for 1pm on January 3 and 4."

"All ticketholders who were unable to attend

will receive further advice directly regarding potential exchanges to those additional performances, or next year's pantomime Mother Goose. We are continuing to contact schools and other ticketholders affected by recent weather conditions. Schools will be offered refunds or exchanges to Mother Goose."

"We also hope to confirm a rescheduled screening of Oscar Wilde's 'A Woman of No Importance' in due course. We will contact those ticketholders when we have further information."

Christmas TV

Film highlights



A great escape!



Soapland drama



Your essential 12-page festive programme guide

Best of Christmas TV

FESTIVE FILM GUIDE



Love Actually – Hugh Grant and Martine McCutcheon

LOVE ACTUALLY ★★★★

(Christmas Eve, Sky Christmas, 8pm)

Nine intertwined stories examine the complexities of the one emotion that connects us all: love. Among the characters explored are David (Hugh Grant), the handsome newly elected British prime minister. All of London is in love – or longing to be – in Four Weddings and a Funeral writer Richard Curtis' first directorial effort. Billed as "the ultimate romantic comedy," Love Actually involves more than a dozen main characters, each weaving his or her way into another's heart over the course of one particularly eventful Christmas.

PREMIERE: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

★★★★★

(Christmas Day, Sky Premiere, 8pm)

Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" is a live-action re-telling of the studio's animated classic which refashions the classic characters from the tale as old as time for a contemporary audience, staying true to the original music while updating the score with several new songs. "Beauty and the Beast" is the fantastic journey of Belle (Emma Watson), a bright, beautiful and independent young woman who is taken prisoner by a beast (Dan Stevens) in his castle. Despite her fears, she learns to look beyond the Beast's hideous exterior and realize the kind heart and soul of the true Prince within.

ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

★★★★

(Boxing Day, Sky Disney, 8pm)

Alice (Mia Wasikowska) returns to the magical world of Underland, only to find the Hatter (Johnny Depp) in a horrible state. With the help of her friends, Alice must travel through time to save the Mad Hatter and Underland's fate from the evil clutches of the Red Queen (Helena Bonham Carter) and a clock like creature, known as Time.

This film marks Tim Burton and Johnny Depp's ninth collaboration together. This is also their first collaboration wherein Tim doesn't direct, but produces.

This was also the late, great Alan Rickman's last film. He died four months before the film's release.

BRIDGET JONES'S BABY

★★★★

(Wednesday December 27, Sky Comedy, 8pm)

BrIDGET's focus on single life and her career is interrupted when she finds herself pregnant, but with one hitch ... she can only be fifty percent sure of the identity of her baby's father.

OsCar winners Renée Zellweger and Colin Firth are joined by Patrick Dempsey for the next chapter of the world's favorite singleton in Bridget Jones's Baby. After breaking up with Mark Darcy (Firth), Bridget Jones's (Zellweger) "happily ever after" hasn't quite gone according to plan. She decides to focus on her job as top news producer and surround herself with old friends and new. For once, Bridget has everything completely under control ...

TERMINATOR GENISYS

★★

(Thursday, December 28, Film 4, 9pm)

When John Connor (Jason Clarke), leader of the human resistance, sends Sgt. Kyle Reese (Jai Courtney) back to 1984 to protect Sarah Connor (Emilia Clarke) and safeguard the future, an unexpected turn of events creates a fractured time-line.

Now, Sgt. Reese finds himself in a new and unfamiliar version of the past, where he is faced with unlikely allies, including the Guardian (Arnold Schwarzenegger) dangerous new enemies, and an unexpected new mission: To reset the future ...

Guardian – Arnold Schwarzenegger



A lavish adaption of Louisa May Alcott's classic Little Women



Period drama The Miniaturist



Stephen Tonkinson stars in Eric, Ernie & Me

Schedule packed with a

From comedy to classics, we pick 12 of the must-see television shows due to hit your screens this Christmas



It will be a bitter sweet Christmas for Peter Capaldi, as he regenerates into the 13th doctor – and a female at that!

by the great Heidi Thomas. The Call the Midwife creator has enlisted the likes of Angela Lansbury, Michael Gambon and Emily Watson to star in this take which is set against the backdrop of the American Civil War.

There will be so much to switch on to over the holidays it will imperative to plan your viewing with military precision!

To help kick off your choices, check out our 12 of the best of what's on the box over the festive period:-

LITTLE WOMEN

(Boxing Day, BBC1, 8pm; Wednesday December 27, 8pm; Thursday December 28, 8.30pm)

Louisa May Alcott's classic, in this lavish adaptation the March sisters confront growing pains, financial shortages, family tragedies and romantic rivalries in mid-19th-century Massachusetts.

Jo struggles for independence and sometimes clashes with her beloved mother and her sisters Meg, Amy and Beth. She also contends with their cranky Aunt March, their impulsive neighbour Laurie and kindly linguistics professor Friedrich Bhaer.

This marvellous story has been adapted

It will probably be a bitter sweet Christmas for the superb Peter Capaldi, as he watches himself regenerate from the 12th doctor to the 13th – and a female at that! Good Lord.

And of course SHE gets a new Tardis and costume. It's only fair that, she is a woman. Jodie Whittaker will mark an incredibly exciting new chapter in the show's history. This special will guest-star Mark Gattis as a First World War soldier, named "The Captain", and will be Pearl Mackie's final episode as companion Bill Potts.

SNOW BEARS

(Boxing Day, BBC1, 6.30pm)

Packed with the ooh and ah factor, this lovely film features teeny-weeny polar bear cubs. Guaranteed to turn the hardest of hearts into pure mush, you won't be able to help falling for these small furry fellows, just by seeing their tiny little paws and noses.

And of course how their mother gently cares for her babies will resonate with good mothers everywhere.

This is an offering entirely centred solely on the story of two cubs and their mother as they battle the odds to travel 400 miles in search of seal-rich pack ice at the North Pole.

VICTORIA

(Christmas Day, ITV, 7pm)

With Prince Albert having been widely recognised for inventing Christmas as we know it, many fans will be ensuring they don't miss this two-hour Christmas special.

We return to Buckingham Palace, where the young queen (Jenna Coleman) is feeling gloomy. Of course it is up to Albert (Tom Hughes) to spread a little festive cheer and magic, by turning their home into a wonder-

land. But he infuriates his wife by inviting two unwelcome guests, her awful mother and Uncle Leopold. Oh dear ...

MARY, MEL AND SUE'S SURPRISE PARTY

(Christmas Eve, BBC1, time)

Even though Channel 4's version of The Great British Bake Off has turned out to be pleasantly enjoyable, it is still good here to see Mary, Mel and Sue reunited – although it's just a one-off and not related to Bake Off at all.

An unusual mix, it is like a mix of DIY SOS and Noel's Christmas Presents.

The trio visit a community in south Wales that's had a bit of a tough time of it, trying to sprinkle a touch of festive magic.

THE HIGHWAY RAT

(Christmas Day, BBC1, 4.45pm)

It wouldn't be Christmas without a special big animation for all of us to enjoy, whatever our age. This is an adaptation of Julia Don-

Best of Christmas TV



Mary, Mel and Sue's Surprise Party is a one-off special



Snow Bears – Touching tale of cubs and their mother



Sheridan Smith stars in David Walliams' Ratburger

SOAP OPERA GUIDE



Carla Connor returns to Coronation Street

As you gleefully rub your hands together at the thought of all that lovely Christmas grub on the table and great gifts under the tree, don't forget to look forward to another treat to come – the Yuletide soaps.

Just what has Coronation Street, EastEnders and Emmerdale got planned for their big story lines this year, as soaps typically go huge for Christmas?

So grab a mince pie, pour your first mulled wine of the year and settle down in front of your roaring winter fire to enjoy this preview.

CORONATION STREET

Also in the soaps this Christmas, in Coronation Street Peter threatens to kill Billy, Carla returns with a secret, Luke is in danger from Phelan, Sinead has doubts about the wedding.

If that isn't enough, Rana vows to tell Zeedan about Kate and Bethany agrees to a relationship with Craig. The big story line is Coronation Street's Carla Connor setting tongues wagging by sticking to soft drinks when she returns to the cobbles.

When this becomes a repeated occurrence for Carla over the holidays, speculation naturally begins over why she's not knocking back the wine like she usually would be.

Although loyal friend Roy is respecting Carla's wishes, his mood sours on New Year's Eve when he thinks he spots her drinking at the Bistro.

The mystery takes another twist when Roy Cropper (David Neilson) returns from a holiday in the Lake District earlier than planned, wanting to see Carla after hearing that she's back in town.

It's clear that Carla has already been confiding in Roy way before her return to the Street, as she begs him to keep her secret now that she's back. Roy begs Carla to move in with him rather than returning to Devon.

EASTENDERS

The voicemail that Jane Beale left for Stacey as she departed Walford – in which she told how Max caused Steven's death and left her to die – has so far gone unheard, due to the phone being stolen by young Riley Taylor. But when the device is returned, Max is left exposed.

He is currently a social pariah due to his dealing with Willmott-Brown, and his only friend is Stacey, who has let him stay at the Fowlers'.

But her patience wears thin on Christmas Eve, when he lies to get her alone.

Meanwhile, Karen finds Riley and Chatham's stash of stolen phones, and tells Keegan to return Stacey's. Max is delighted when his daughter Abi joins him for lunch on Christmas Day, but Stacey's phone is a ticking time bomb.

What will happen when it explodes? Viewers will have to wait and see whether Stacey checks her phone and whether she'll discover the truth. This comes as Max and Stacey are set for a showdown, after he causes chaos with her husband Martin Fowler.

EMMERDALE

Robert has a surreal Christmas Day. Aaron and Alex share a passionate kiss, Debbie is betrayed by Tom, Cain steals Moira he loves her and the Dingles plot to stop the golf course development.

Robert and Aaron's relationship takes centre stage for a special Christmas Day episode when Robert wakes up in confusion and finds himself reliving the same day over and over again – think Groundhog Day mixed with A Christmas Carol and you'll get the idea!

As Robert's day gets progressively stranger, all is not quite as it seems but will the scheming Sugden, who is gutted to have lost the love of his life, Aaron, learn anything as he's forced to go over things again and again in a perpetual nightmare?

And could this be the wake-up call he needs to reunite with the only man he's ever truly wanted?

Meanwhile, when he tries to give the Whites a present for his son, baby Seb, they're not impressed. Can outcast Rob turn things around or are all his ruined relationships beyond repair?



Aaron and Alex, Emmerdale



Christmas Day staple Call The Midwife sees the staff shiver in the coldest winter for 300 years



The Highway Rat – It wouldn't be Christmas without a big animation



Carols from King's – The annual oasis of light in the darkness



David Walliams stars in Grandpa's Great Escape



McMafia – Global crime in the spotlight

aldson and Axel Scheffler's children's book about a greedy rat who tyrannises animals along the highway, stealing their food – clever from a rabbit, nuts from a squirrel, a leaf from some ants and a horse's hay.

But the Highway Rat (voiced by David Tennant) has an Achilles heel – sugar. He craves it and his sweet tooth leads him to a sticky end.

GRANDPA'S GREAT ESCAPE

(New Year's Day, BBC1, 6.55pm)

A man of many talents, David Walliams can name being a bestselling author as one of his many bows. Here are two of his new tales.

In Grandpa's Great Escape, Grandpa (Tom Courtney) is a former wartime flying ace who now has dementia. He ends up moving into an old folk's home, Twilight Towers, run by the sinister and conniving Miss Dandy (Jennifer Saunders).

In Ratburger, (Christmas Eve, Sky 1, 6pm) we hear the story of Zoe, a girl with a stepmother (Sheridan Smith), who can't abide her and a dad who is never around.

CALL THE MIDWIFE

(Christmas Day, BBC1, 7.40pm)

A Christmas Day staple, it's 1963 and Poplar is blanketed by snow in the coldest winter for 300 years. Brrrrr. Blizzards, brutal low temperatures, power cuts, road closures and frozen pipes come to test the patience of the saintly nuns and midwives.

Val helps a young couple, newly arrived in London, as the mum goes through a traumatic birth, while Sister Julienne struggles to reunite a family.

ERIC, ERNIE & ME

(Friday, December 29, BBC4, 9pm)

Neil Forsyth's drama focuses on Eric and Ernie's scriptwriter Eddie Braben, who became a star in his own right, particularly after all of those brilliant Christmas shows.

Stephen Tompkinson plays Braben as he takes the duo to hitherto unimaginable heights of TV success, culminating in the 1977 Christmas show – the one with Elton John.

Mark Bonnar, of Unforgotten, plays Eric

Morecambe, while Neil Maskell, of Humans fame, is Ernie Wise.

MCMAFIA

(New Year's Day, BBC1, 9pm; Tuesday January 2, BBC1, 9pm)

You can be forgiven for being very excited about this adaptation of journalist Misha Glenny's bestseller McMafia – a look at the far-reaching effects of global crime.

The wonderful James Norton, of Grange Hill and War and Peace, takes the lead in this menacing crime drama. He plays Alex Godman, the English-raised son of Russian exiles with a Mafia past, whom Alex has spent his whole life trying to escape from. He has built up a legitimate business with his girlfriend, Rebecca. However, he is then drawn into a world of money laundering, ruthless intelligence agencies and corrupt politicians.

THE MINIATURIST

(Boxing Day, BBC1, 9pm; Wednesday December 27, BBC1, 9pm)

Set in 1686, the story begins with young Nella Oortman who – after an arranged marriage – arrives in Amsterdam to begin her new life as the wife of wealthy merchant Johannes Brandt.

She is met by Johannes' cold and unwelcoming sister Marin. And when Johannes does appear, he only presents her with an unusual wedding gift: a doll's house replica of their home. So she tracks down the elusive "miniaturist" to furnish this giant cabinet. As her own house starts to reveal its secrets, so does her doll's house.

CAROLS FROM KING'S

(Christmas Eve, BBC2, 5.45pm)

We obviously cannot miss out this wonderful annual oasis of light in the darkness at Christmas time. After a year scarred by atrocity after atrocity, both here and abroad, this beautiful service brings time for peaceful reflection.

Whether you are religious or not, this offering will give you time to pause amid all the Christmas Eve preparations to mull over the things that really matter.

No paper, no worries!

THE BIG DAY IS ON ITS WAY, YOU'VE ALREADY BOUGHT YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFTS BUT THERE'S NO WRAPPING PAPER TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE.

But never fear, here are some crafty creations that will personalise your presents, whilst being super savvy and recycling materials to help save the world too! Each material chosen can be re-used, recycled or re-worn meaning you can get on with enjoying the rest of your Christmas day and eating enough food for a small village without worrying about all that tidying up.

Brown Paper

A classic combination of brown paper and ribbon is a traditional trend that is always a popular choice when it comes to gift wrapping.



Brown paper chic

Tissue Paper

Use patterned tissue paper or create your own with homemade stamps for a simple and cost-effective way to wrap your gifts. This lightweight material is great for adding a personalised touch.

Tinfoil

Not the most traditional of materials this one is a little bit out there and requires a bit of imagination. Simply wrap your gift in tinfoil and then embellish with a beautiful ribbon or some string in a bright colour to make it pop.

Newspaper

A cheap way to get an old fashioned feel. For an extra special touch why not use a special dated newspaper or one with a puzzle on to complete for anyone who likes a brainteaser.

Scarves

Using scarves adds texture and a warm wintery feel under the Christmas tree. Add a matching ribbon and tie in a bow to hold the present together. This also gives the recipient another special gift that they wouldn't have expected.

Tea Towels

For nick nacks or small items, pop them into a cardboard tube that you can then wrap in a festive tea towel. Then twist and secure the ends with ribbon or tape to form a cracker like parcel. This way they'll never be able to guess what you have bought them either.

Wallpaper

Use printed wallpaper samples or leftover clippings for a creative way to wrap up your gifts this Christmas. Finish with textured string or metallic ribbon for a modern twist. Available in a wide range of colours, patterns and textures you can personalise each one to suit the recipient.

Crepe Paper

For a rustic approach to wrapping crepe paper is a quick and easy way to wrap up presents but still make them look a little bit different. Crinkle or ruche the paper for an extra bit of texture and finish with a bow.

Now you've got the presents wrapped, make sure your tree is a seasonal stunner this year...

1. Create a snowy scene

A frosted tree can create the look of an Alpine sanctuary, and white, silver, and clear glass decorations will add to that feeling of being a sparkling, snowy wonderland.

2. Look for Eastern inspiration

Shake up your style and opt for an exciting, adventurous look, with an Eastern flavour and baubles that in a riot of colour, particularly turquoise, orange, fuchsia pink and red.

3. Pair burnished gold with brilliant blue

Sapphire blue – so fashionable in decor – and glowing gold conjures a luxurious, decadent effect.

Creating a contemporary Christmas allows you to think outside the box in terms of decorations – choose geometric-shaped baubles over traditional spheres, or go even further with elegant butterfly clips attached to tree branches and dazzling glittered tree-toppers.

4. Return to tradition

For a classic Christmas, deep forest greens and rich reds are the cornerstone, enhanced by iconic baubles featuring Santas and sleighs.

"Classic red and green is enduringly popular," says Stephen Evans, managing director at Christmas Tree World. "You can keep it simple with touches of white, or make it look more regal with hints of gold."

"This look keys into all the feel-good factors of the season – warmth, nostalgia and familiarity. Coordinate your gift wrapping so the presents under the tree complement the look, and it'll be picture perfect in no time."

Christmas Eve

BBC 1	BBC 2	ITV	CH4	CH5
Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show, on at 8.30pm 6.00 Breakfast 7.25 Match of the Day (R) 9.05 FILM: Planes (2013) ★★ 10.30 FILM: The Santa Clause (1994) ★★★ 12.00 Life in the Snow Gordon Buchanan meets animals that live in snowy conditions. (R) 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.15 Songs of Praise: The Big Sing Katherine Jenkins and Jill Gill present a carol concert from the Royal Albert Hall. 1.45 Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas Shaun causes mayhem at a country fair. (R) 2.15 Hammy's Boomerang Adventure Over the Hedge short spin-off. (R) 2.20 FILM: Monsters University (2013) Animated comedy prequel, with the voices of John Goodman and Billy Crystal. ★★★	The annual service from King's College, Carols from King's, 5.45pm 6.15 Nature's Weirdest Events (R) 7.00 Island Parish Shetland (R) 7.30 FILM: The Prince and Me (2004) Romantic comedy, starring Julia Stiles and Luke Mably. ★★ 9.15 The Big Family Cooking Showdown (R) 10.15 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites Matt Tebbutt presents highlights of the series. 11.45 Mary Berry's Absolute Christmas Favourites (R) 12.20 The Hairy Bikers Home for Christmas Dave Myers and Si King create a series of festive recipes. 1.20 Alex Polizzi's Perfect Christmas The hotelier presents a guide to entertaining at home over the festive period. (R) 2.20 Cheetahs – Growing Up Fast Two years in the lives of a cheetah mother and her cubs. (R)	Bradley Walsh hosts, A Christmas Chase: Celebrity Special, 5.50pm 6.00 CITV: Sooty. (R) 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street (R) 6.20 Bottom Knocker Street (R) 6.35 Dino Dana (R) 6.45 Super 4 (R) 7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story (R) 7.05 Om Nom Stories 7.10 Nerd & Monsters (R) 7.20 Nerd & Monsters (R) 7.30 The Tom and Jerry Show (R) 7.40 The Tom and Jerry Show (R) 7.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.00 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.10 Horrid Henry (R) 8.25 Make It Pop (R) 8.55 Scrambled! Christmas Stocking (R) 9.25 Save Money: Good Food (R) 9.55 FILM: Jack Frost (1998) ★ 11.50 Catchphrase Christmas Special (R) 12.45 ITV News and Weather; Weather. 12.55 FILM: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002) ★★★	Child Genius vs Celebrities Christmas Special, on at 8.00pm 7.00 FILM: The Rugrats in Paris: The Movie (2000) Animated adventure, with the voice of Christine Cavanaugh. ★★★ 8.15 The Big Bang Theory (R) 9.05 Jamie's Quick & Easy Food (R) 9.40 Christmas Brunch With guests Anton Du Beke, Danny Mac and Tom Fletcher. 12.40 Paul Hollywood: A Baker's Life Paul shares his favourite Mediterranean recipes on a trip to Cyprus. Last in the series. (R) 1.10 Jamie's Italian Christmas Jamie Oliver cooks a festive meal with an Italian twist. (R) 2.10 The Simpsons A corporation buys Springfield Elementary School. (R) 2.40 The Simpsons An adult Bart and Lisa return home for Christmas with their parents. (R)	Last in the series, The Yorkshire Vet at Christmas, on at 8.00pm 6.00 Milkshake! 9.20 FILM: Gone with the Wind (1939) A plantation heiress has a tumultuous relationship with a roguish Southern gentleman during the American Civil War. Epic romantic drama, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable. ★★★★ 1.35 FILM: Oklahoma! (1955) A farm girl is torn between two suitors, a charming cowboy and a grim, brooding farmhand. Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical Western, starring Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones. ★★★
Early View 3.55 Doodlebugs 4.10 Home (2015) ★★★ 5.35 BBC News 5.50 Midlands Today; Weather 6.00 Countryfile 7.00 Mary, Mel and Sue's Big Christmas Thank You Mary Berry, Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins prepare a festive surprise for volunteers at a community centre that has been a focal point for a struggling South Wales town. 8.00 EastEnders Lauren and Abi make their feelings clear to Max, Karen confronts her children about the stolen phones and Mick tells Phil he wants nothing more to do with the job. 8.30 Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show The comedy star concludes his entertainment showcase with a festive special, featuring performances by soul singer Seal and comedian Bill Bailey. 9.35 Not Going Out Christmas Special Lee buys the perfect Christmas present for his children, but the kids' grandparents have the same idea, leaving him on a race against time to find an alternative. 10.15 BBC News; Weather. 10.30 The Vicar of Dibley The villagers celebrate Christmas, and vicar Geraldine learns there is a heavy price to be paid for festive kindness when she agrees to attend three slap-up lunches. (R)	3.20 Guys and Dolls (1955) Musical, starring Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando. ★★★★ 5.45 Carols from King's The annual service from King's College, Cambridge. 7.00 Dad's Army Mainwaring's men face the might of a rival platoon in a battle to prove their worth. Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier play the superannuated soldiers. (R) 8.00 Christmas University Challenge 2017 New series. Jeremy Paxman presents the first round, featuring famous alumni from Durham University and Keble College, Oxford, competing for a place in the semi-finals. 8.30 Winter's Weirdest Events Chris Packham explores unusual and unexplained natural events that occur around the world during winter, from tornadoes made of snow to penguins attempting death-defying feats. 9.30 The Great Gatsby (2013) Premiere. A naive writer befriends a decadent millionaire and slowly uncovers the dark underside of his lavish lifestyle. Period drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tobey Maguire. ★★★ 11.55 Christmas TOTP2 Special Mark Radcliffe presents festive performances from the Top of the Pops archive, including classics by Slade, Wham!, Wizzard, East 17, Mud, the Jackson 5 and Johnny Mathis. (R)	4.00 Cannonball Christmas Special Festival edition of the water-based obstacle course challenge, hosted by Andrew Flintoff. 5.00 You've Been Framed! Unwrapped Harry Hill narrates festive-themed clips. (R) 5.30 ITV News Central; Weather. 5.35 ITV News and Weather 5.50 A Christmas Chase: Celebrity Special With Patti Clare, Matt Richardson, Kirsty Wark and Jimmy Osmond. 6.40 All Star Musicals Andrew Flintoff and Michael Crawford present a show in which seven famous faces each perform a song from a famous musical in front of a packed house at the London Palladium.	3.05 The Simpsons (R) 3.35 The Borrowers (1997) Children's fantasy, starring John Goodman. ★★★ 5.20 The Snowman Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) 5.55 The Snowman and the Snowdog (R) 6.20 Channel 4 News 6.30 The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) Puppet comedy, starring Michael Caine. ★★★	4.15 Scrooge – A Christmas Carol (1951) (b/w) ★★★ 6.00 Agatha Christie's Crooked House (R) 7.00 5 News Update The latest headlines, sport and weather. 7.05 Agatha Christie's Crooked House Adaptation of the mystery novel, starring Max Irons and Terence Stamp. A man returning to London from Cairo investigates the poisoning of his fiancee's grandfather. (R) 8.00 The Yorkshire Vet at Christmas Peter Wright is called to an emergency at John Swales' farm, where one of his prize-winning Limousins is struggling to give birth. Last in the series. 9.00 André Rieu: My Life in Music Profile of the violinist, examining his upbringing in the Netherlands, early musical influences, and the bold moves that have made him one of classical music's biggest stars. 10.20 André Rieu: Christmas in London A festive concert by the Dutch violinist and the Johann Strauss Orchestra, featuring carols as well as songs including Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah and the Concierto de Aranjuez. (R) 11.30 An Audience with Donny & Marie The Osmond siblings entertain a celebrity audience in a programme based on their Las Vegas stage show, featuring old favourites and songs from their 2009 Donny & Marie album. (R)
Prime Time 8.30 The Great Expectations (2012) ★★★	8.30 The Great Expectations (2012) ★★★ 10.25 ITV News and Weather; Weather. 10.45 A Night for the Emergency Services Members of the emergency services team show off their performance skills, teaming up with the likes of Diversity, Leona Lewis, Michael Ball and Alfie Boe, and Tokio Myers. (R) 11.45 Christmas Carols on ITV Alfie Boe introduces a traditional Christmas Eve carol service, featuring Nadine Coyle, Alexander O'Neal, Howard Hewett, Alexis French, Ruthie Henshall and Natasha Barnes. 12.45 FILM: Casino Royale (1967) Spoof James Bond adventure, starring David Niven. ★ 3.00 ITV Nightscreen 5.00 The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) 5.25 Make It Pop (R) 5.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R)	8.30 Maigret in Montmartre The detective investigates the seemingly random murders of a countess and a showgirl – and discovers an unexpected connection between the two victims' past experiences. 10.25 ITV News and Weather; Weather. 10.45 A Night for the Emergency Services Members of the emergency services team show off their performance skills, teaming up with the likes of Diversity, Leona Lewis, Michael Ball and Alfie Boe, and Tokio Myers. (R) 11.45 Christmas Carols on ITV Alfie Boe introduces a traditional Christmas Eve carol service, featuring Nadine Coyle, Alexander O'Neal, Howard Hewett, Alexis French, Ruthie Henshall and Natasha Barnes. 12.45 FILM: Casino Royale (1967) Spoof James Bond adventure, starring David Niven. ★ 3.00 ITV Nightscreen 5.00 The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) 5.25 Make It Pop (R) 5.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R)	9.00 The Inbetweeners The friends decide to play truant from sixth form and buy alcohol for an all-day drinking session, which is interrupted when Neil's father comes home early. (R) 11.35 The Inbetweeners The gang goes on the infamous sociology and geography field trip to Swanage, and Will takes a shine to new girl Lauren – but she is only interested in Simon. (R)	12.10 The Inbetweeners (R) 12.40 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.05 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.35 Man Down Christmas Special (R) 2.00 The Last Leg Christmas Special (R) 2.55 The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Special (R) 3.50 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) 4.40 Location, Location, Location (R) 5.35 Four in a Bed (R)
Late View 1.00 FILM: Great Expectations (2012) ★★★				12.35 Lip Sync Battle UK: Rufus Hound v Jorgie Porter (R) 1.00 SuperCasino 3.05 Love/Hate (R) 4.00 My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) 4.50 House Doctor (R) 5.15 Access 5.20 Wildlife SOS (R) 5.45 Chinese Food in Minutes (R)

Christmas Day

Early View

BBC 1



Jenny Agutter stars, *Call the Midwife*, on at 7.40pm

6.00 Breakfast News, entertainment and weather reports. 9.00 CBeebies' *The Snow Queen* Stage musical adaptation of the tale by Hans Christian Andersen. 9.45 *Go Jetters* 10.00 *Christmas Morning* from All Saints Fulham A live service led by the Rev Penny Seabrook. 11.00 *The Madagascar Penguins in a Christmas Caper* (R) 11.10 *SnowChick: A Penguin's Tale* Following the first months in the life of an emperor penguin. (R) 12.10 BBC News; Weather. 12.20 *Top of the Pops Christmas Special* With performances by Ed Sheeran, Dua Lipa, Clean Bandit, Rita Ora and the Script. 1.20 *FILM: Toy Story 3* (2010) Animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. ★★★★

BBC 2



David Mitchell stars in the comedy, *Upstart Crow*, on at 8.25pm

6.10 *The Hairy Bikers Home for Christmas* With the Rev Kate Bottley and Jon Culshaw. (R) 7.10 *Island Parish Shetland* (R) 7.40 *FILM: Bee Movie* (2007) Animated comedy, with the voice of Jerry Seinfeld. ★★★ 9.00 *The Big Family Cooking Showdown* Families from Wiltshire and Birmingham compete. (R) 10.00 *Harry Potter: A History of Magic* (R) 11.00 *Carols from King's* The annual service from King's College, Cambridge. (R) 12.15 *FILM: The Importance of Being Earnest* (2002) Oscar Wilde comedy, starring Rupert Everett and Colin Firth. ★★★ 1.40 BBC Proms 2017: *Oklahoma!* Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical *Oklahoma!*

ITV



Paul O'Grady: *For the Love of Dogs at Christmas*, on at 7.00pm

6.00 CITV: *Sooty*. (R) 6.10 *Oddbods* (R) 6.15 *Om Nom Stories* (R) 6.20 *Signed Stories: Share a Story* (R) 6.25 *Almost Naked Animals* (R) 6.35 *Horrid Henry* (R) 6.50 *Horrid Henry* (R) 7.05 *Horrid Henry* (R) 7.20 *Horrid Henry* (R) 7.30 *Scrambled!: Scrambled! Christmas Special* 7.35 *Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show* (R) 7.50 *Scrambled!: The Bagel and Becky Show* (R) 8.10 *Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go!* (R) 8.30 *Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo!* (R) 9.05 *Scrambled!: Wishfar!* (R) 9.25 *FILM: National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* (1989) ★★★ 11.10 *FILM: Mr Bean's Holiday* (2007) ★ 12.50 *FILM: Santa Claus: The Movie* (1985) ★★

CH4



The restaurant hosts a festive party, *First Dates at Christmas*, on at 7.00pm

6.00 *FILM: Rugrats Go Wild* (2003) ★★ 7.20 *The Bear* (R) 7.45 *Prep & Landing: Naughty vs Nice* (R) 8.10 *Prep & Landing* (R) 8.40 *Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas* (R) 9.05 *The Simpsons* (R) 9.35 *The Simpsons* (R) 10.05 *The Simpsons* (R) 10.35 *The Simpsons* (R) 11.05 *FILM: Dr Seuss' The Lorax* (2012) ★★★ 12.45 *The Snowman* Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) 1.20 *The Snowman* and the *Snowdog* Animated sequel to classic festive tale *The Snowman*. (R) 1.55 *Father Christmas* (R) 2.25

Channel 4 News 2.30 *The Alternative Christmas Message*

2.35 *FILM: Scrooged* (1988) Christmas comedy, starring Bill Murray. ★★★

CH5



Britain's Best Loved Double Acts: *Christmas Special*, on at 10.55pm

6.00 *Milkshake!* 8.55 *FILM: Scrooge* (1970) A miserly man is taught the error of his ways by a host of spectral visitors. Musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, starring Albert Finney and Alec Guinness. ★★★ 11.05 *FILM: Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954) A cowboy decides to get married, prompting his six hellraising brothers to kidnap brides for themselves. Stanley Donen's musical Western, starring Howard Keel and Jane Powell. ★★★★ 1.05 *FILM: Singin' in the Rain* (1952) A silent-movie star tries to win the heart of an aspiring actress as the dawn of sound changes the film business for ever. Musical comedy, starring Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds. ★★★★

Prime Time

Late View

3.00 *The Queen's Christmas Broadcast*

3.10 *Cinderella* (2015) ★★★

4.45 *The Highway Rat*

5.15 BBC News; Weather.

5.30 *Doctor Who*

6.30 *Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special*

7.40 *Call the Midwife* Boxing Day sees heavy snowfall covering the country and the adverse weather causes major disruption across Poplar as roads become blocked and pipes freeze.

9.00 *EastEnders* Things are set to explode for Max as Stacey's phone – with all Jane's incriminating voicemails – is returned to her. Mick discovers the hard way not to cross Aidan Maguire.

10.00 *Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special* First of two festive specials. Grandad is convinced the house is haunted, Cathy has an internet date and Rory hopes to improve his looks by undergoing plastic surgery.

10.35 *300 Years of French & Saunders* Comedy double act Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders mark the 30th anniversary of their eponymous sketch show, which ran for six series up until 2007.

11.25 BBC News; Weather.

11.40 *On Christmas Night* Colin Salmon reads Luke's account of the angels appearing to shepherds in the fields above Bethlehem to proclaim the joyful news of the birth of Christ.

11.45 *Have I Got a Bit More 2017 News for You* An extended compilation of memorable moments from the satirical quiz over the past year, with a variety of guest hosts and panellists joining captains Paul Merton and Ian Hislop.

12.30 *Darcey Bussell: Looking for Fred Astaire* (R) 1.30 *Weather for the Week Ahead* 1.35 BBC News

4.30 Dame Vera Lynn: *Happy 100th Birthday* (R)

5.30 *Sign Zone: The Queen's Christmas Broadcast* (R)

5.35 *The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show* (R)

6.45 *Winter's Weirdest Events* (R)

7.45 *Dad's Army* Frazer is unable to hide his delight when Captain Mainwaring's disreputable brother gatecrashes a sherry party for local dignitaries. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe. (R)

8.25 *Upstart Crow* Will's new play is to be performed at the queen's Christmas festivities, while the Shakespeares find themselves with some uninvited guests. Emma Thompson guest stars as Elizabeth I.

9.00 *Tom Jones & Beverley Knight's Gospel Christmas* Tom Jones and Beverley Knight host a festive concert from Cardiff featuring a blend of traditional gospel, carols and songs of spiritual intent by greats like Prince and Bob Dylan. First shown on BBC One Wales.

10.00 *Judi Dench: All the World's Her Stage* Billy Connolly, Samantha Bond, Daniel Craig and Ian McKellen are among those reminiscing about the veteran actress in this celebration of her 60-year career. (R)

11.05 *Mrs Henderson Presents* (2005) A widow invests her fortune in an abandoned London theatre and defies censorship laws to stage a controversial nude revue. Fact-based comedy drama, with Judi Dench. ★★★

12.45 *FILM: My Week with Marilyn* (2011) ★★★ 2.15 *This Is BBC Two*

3.00 *The Queen* Her Majesty's annual address.

3.10 *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004)

The teenage wizard is alarmed to learn a dangerous fugitive sorcerer is searching for him. The third in the fantasy adventure series, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Gary Oldman. ★★★

5.50 *Emmerdale* Robert gets a taste of how different his life could be.

6.50 *ITV News and Weather*

7.00 *Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas*

Paul follows the work of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home over the festive period, hoping to find a home for a heavily pregnant stray found wet and bedraggled on Hampstead Heath.

8.00 *Coronation Street*

Peter threatens to kill Billy, Carla's surprise arrival annoys Aidan, Daniel finds Tracy sneaking Steve out of Number 1, and Brian is arrested.

9.00 *Victoria*

The queen and Prince Albert have very different expectations for a family Christmas and the arrival of guests at the palace causes further tension. Starring Jenna Coleman.

11.00 *ITV News and Weather*

11.15 *The Holiday* (2006)

Two single women from opposite sides of the Atlantic find love after they swap houses over Christmas. Romantic comedy, with Cameron Diaz. ★★★

1.45 *FILM: The Dam Busters* (1954)

An engineer designs an ingenious bouncing bomb to destroy major dams in Germany's industrial heartland. Fact-based Second World War drama, with Michael Redgrave and Richard Todd. (b/w) ★★★★ 3.50 *ITV Nightscreen*

4.30 *Dumbo* (1941) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Edward Brophy. ★★★★

5.50 *Home Alone* (1990)

Family comedy, starring Macaulay Culkin. ★★★

7.40 *The Great Christmas Bake Off* Part one of two. Former contestants Paul Jagger, Beca Lyne-Pirkis, Selasi Gbormittah and Val Stones face three festive challenges in a bid to win the Christmas Star Baker title.

9.00 *First Dates at Christmas*

The restaurant hosts a festive party as maître d' Fred and his Christmas Cupids celebrate a year that has seen proposals, engagement rings and the show's very first baby.

10.00 *Alan Carr's Christmas Chat*

Man with guests Noel Gallagher, Christian Slater, John Bishop, Lorraine Kelly, Rob Beckett and Gogglebox stars Giles and Mary. Plus, music by Kasabian, Adam Lambert and Dua Lipa.

12.00 *George Michael: Freedom*

The singer-songwriter narrates a documentary charting his life and career, focusing on the period around the release of his 1990 album *Listen without Prejudice Vol 1*. (R) 1.40 *George Michael: Live in London*

Footage from the singer-songwriter's two shows at London's Earls Court in August 2008. (R) 2.45 *The Crystal Maze*

A team of fast-food workers tackles the zones. (R) 3.40 *Location, Location, Location* Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer revisit property-hunters in London. (R) 4.35 *Four in a Bed* The competitors are invited to Grassington Lodge in North Yorkshire. (R) 5.00 *Kirstie's Handmade Christmas* Kirstie Allsopp showcases some of the best Christmas cakes. (R) 5.20 *FILM: Moomins on the Riviera* (2014) Premiere. Children's animation, with the voice of Russell Tovey. ★★★

1.45 *SuperCasino*

Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.05 *Love/Hate* John Boy believes Stumpy has become an informant after the gardai raid one of his drug factories, and orders Darren to exact a violent revenge. (R) 4.00 *Now That's Funny!* A collection of internet-sourced videos with a family friendly hook, featuring people who crash weddings, sporting fails and flops, and science experiments. (R) 4.45 *House Doctor* Home improvement highlights from the series. (R) 5.10 *House Busters* (R) 5.35 *Wildlife SOS* (R)

Festive traditions 21

Pickles and fishy friends



Banish the broom to keep away bad spirits

10 WEIRD AND WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS ACROSS EUROPE

Christmas is not the same for everyone around the world! We have gathered 10 weird and wonderful Christmas traditions across Europe that may surprise you....

Potatoes for children in Iceland

Every night, for the 13 nights up till Christmas – Children in Iceland leave their shoes windowsill for troll-like creatures called Yule Lads to fill them with toys and sweets. Naughty children will be met with a potato.



Christmas trees decorated with spider webs in Ukraine

A poor widow and her children couldn't afford to decorate their tree – so spiders did it for them! To this day, Ukrainians honour the Legend of the Christmas Spider and add fake spiders and webs to their trees as decorations.

A fish in the tub?

Before the big feast on Christmas Eve, everyone must chip in to clean the entire house – but Christmas Day is a strict day of rest and relaxation- even the cooking is done in advance!

Quick – hide the broom! In Norway

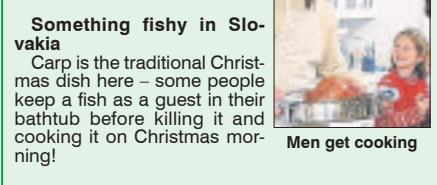
Norwegians hide their brooms to stop witches and evil spirits from stealing them and haunting the skies on Christmas Eve.

If it sticks in Slovakia

Before Slovaks sit down to their Christmas meal, the man of the house throws loska (a kind of pudding) at the ceiling – if it sticks, it's a sign that it'll be a good year.

No eating until a star appears in Poland

In Poland, they don't begin eating until the first star appears – but when they do, they really go for it, with a 12-course meal that includes beetroot soup and herring.



Something fishy in Slovakia

Carp is the traditional Christmas dish here – some people keep a fish as a guest in their bathtubs before killing it and cooking it on Christmas morning!

Pickle your fancy in Germany

Legend has it that, on the night before Christmas, Germans hide a pickle somewhere in the tree – the first child to find it in the morning gets a prize.

You've got to earn it in Latvia

Children open their presents beside the tree. But before they tear off the paper, they might have to recite a poem, sing a song or perform a dance.

Men do the cooking in Greenland

Traditionally, Christmas is the day the men do the cooking, while the women sit back and relax. The menu? A delicacy called Kiviak (seal skin, stuffed with dead birds and fermented for 7 months).

A warm welcome...

Top tips for house guests



Don't outstay your welcome at others' homes

INVITING GUESTS INTO YOUR HOME IS PART AND PARCEL OF CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS, BUT WITH DIFFERENT GENERATIONS OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS GATHERING TOGETHER, IT'S OFTEN DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH ACCEPTABLE GUEST BEHAVIOUR.

Anglian Home Improvements, the windows, doors and conservatories specialist, surveyed over 1,000 UK residents to uncover what we're willing to do in another person's house and what we find rude if guests do in our own.

The results show running a bath without asking, breaking the toilet seat and being sick in the garden are some of the inappropriate things guests have done in their host's house.

When it comes to guest etiquette, the survey revealed that hosts find feet on the furniture a top issue (59%), cutting nails a close second (58%) and taking control of the TV remote (52%) takes the third position in the poll.

Asking for the wi-fi password topped the list of things we're happy to do as a guest, with almost a third (31%) of survey respondents stating they would feel comfortable asking for the code as a guest in someone's home.

This was followed by being comfortable asking to charge a phone, tablet or laptop (24%) coming in second place, and helping yourself to a drink (20%).

Over half of men (59%) said guests cutting their nails in their home is one of the rudest activities, whereas women said that someone putting their feet on the furniture is the worst thing a guest could do in their home (62%).

To help you be a golden guest over the festive period, here are 10 tips for being the perfect Christmas guest:

1. Show up with a gift for every member of the party
2. Offer to help on Christmas day with washing dishes or cooking dinner

3. Ask if there is anything you can bring along, for example alcohol or food

4. Work out what the clothing attire is before attending

5. Make sure you RSVP so they know how many people to cater for

6. Send a thank you note or message to appreciate their hospitality

7. Make sure it's clear how long you're staying – don't overstay your welcome

8. Don't criticise the way they cook or their Christmas traditions

9. Don't sit glued to your phone – pay attention to your hosts

10. Be mindful of how much you drink

Melanie McDonald, head of PR and brand marketing at Anglian Home Improvements, said: "Christmas is a stressful time for those who are hosting, making it even more important to remember your guest etiquette. Being a polite and helpful guest will help to prevent a stressful environment and ensure that everyone gets into the Christmas spirit. Generations gathering together over the festive season can cause some to be offended by modern habits, so make sure to turn your phone on silent and remember your please and thank you!"

"To navigate through the confusing world of modern etiquette, this helpful guide on what is expected in a modern household and what behaviour will mean you are sure to be invited back!"



No hogging the remote

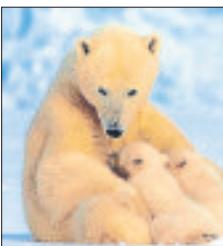


Be a helping hand

Boxing Day

Early View

BBC 1



Documentary following polar bears, Snow Bears, on at 6.30pm

6.00 **BBC News**, entertainment and weather reports. 9.00 **FILM**: *Tinker Bell and the Legend of the NeverBeast* (2014) **★★★** 10.10 **FILM**: *Planes: Fire & Rescue* (2014) **Premiere**. Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Dane Cook. **★★★** 11.25 *Mary, Met and Sue's Big Christmas Thank You* (R) 12.25 **BBC News**; *Weather* 12.35 *Midlands Today*; *Weather* 12.45 *Judi Dench: My Passion for Trees* The actress discovers how trees are a part of Britain's history. (R) 1.45 *Stick Man* Animated adaptation of Julia Donaldson's children's book. (R) 2.10 **FILM**: *Shaun the Sheep Movie* (2015) **Premiere**. Animation, featuring the voice of Justin Fletcher. **★★★**

3.30 Doodlebugs Sketch show in which inanimate objects talk.

3.45 Mary Poppins (1964) Disney musical fantasy, with Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke. **★★★**

6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather

6.20 Midlands Today; Weather

6.30 Snow Bears Documentary following polar bears and their cubs as they travel 400 miles to reach the North Pole as spring sets in, encountering other Arctic wildlife along the way.

7.30 EastEnders Life for the Brannings will never be the same again as the horror of what has happened unfolds – but it soon becomes clear Max's actions have even wider repercussions.

8.00 Little Women New series. Heidi Thomas's adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's 19th-century American coming-of-age tale begins as the four March sisters contemplate a Christmas without their father.

9.00 The Miniaturist Two-part adaptation of Jessie Burton's best-selling novel set in 1686, following 18-year-old Nella Oortman as she begins a new life in Amsterdam as the wife of a wealthy merchant.

10.30 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update

10.45 Match of the Day Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Bournemouth v West Ham United, Huddersfield Town v Stoke City, and West Bromwich Albion v Everton.

12.15 Stacey Dooley in the USA (R) 1.15 *Weather for the Week* **Head** 1.20 **BBC News**

BBC 2



New series, Two Doors Down - Christmas Special, on at 10.30pm

6.15 **Sign Zone: Celebrity Antiques Road Trip** Strictly Come Dancing 2016 champions Ore Oduba and Joanne Clifton compete. (R) 7.15 *Island Parish Shetland* (R) 7.45 **FILM**: *Chimpanzee* (2012) **Premiere**. Documentary following an orphaned chimpanzee. **★★★** 8.55 *The Big Family Cooking Showdown* (R) 9.55 *Nadiya's British Food Adventure* (R) 10.25 *Nadiya's British Food Adventure* (R) 10.55 *The Sweet Makers: A Tudor Treat* (R) 11.55 **FILM**: *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) Musical comedy, starring the Beatles. (b/w) **★★★** 1.20 **FILM**: *The Eagle Has Landed* (1976) Second World War spy adventure, with Michael Caine. **★★★**

3.30 The Repair Shop at Christmas (R)

4.30 Final Score

5.35 Matthew Bourne's Cinderella

7.30 Christmas University Challenge 2017 Selwyn College, Cambridge, featuring writer Robin French, take on St Andrews University, with BBC Scotland Political Editor Brian Taylor hoping for victory. Jeremy Paxman hosts.

8.00 Reindeer Family & Me Gordon Buchanan goes to live with a family from the nomadic Sami culture in Finnish Lapland, and undertakes a journey across the frozen wilderness with the help of a reindeer.

9.00 Dragons' Den A serial entrepreneur pitches his online greeting card business, and a Surrey-based inventor hopes his word game could become a family Christmas favourite.

10.00 QI Sandi Toksvig hosts the festive edition with Jason Manford, Romesh Ranganathan, Holly Walsh and Alan Davies answering the questions.

10.30 Two Doors Down - Christmas Special New series. Beth and Eric's plans for a quiet festive feast are thwarted when Cathy and Colin's flight to the French Alps is cancelled, and Christine also turns up with her granddaughter.

11.00 Joanna & Jennifer: Absolutely Champs

Absolutely Fabulous duo Joanna Lumley and Jennifer Saunders explore the Champagne region of north eastern France to find out how their characters' favourite tipple is made. (R) 12.00 *Saturday Night Fever - The Ultimate Disco Movie* (R) 1.10 *Tom Jones & Beverley Knight's Gospel Christmas* (R)

ITV



Festive edition, Birds of a Feather Christmas Special, 10.15pm

6.00 **CITV: Sooty** (R) 6.10 *Oddbods* (R) 6.15 *Om Nom Stories* (R) 6.20 **Signed Stories: Share a Story** (R) 6.25 *Almost Naked Animals* (R) 6.35 *Nerds & Monsters* (R) 6.50 *Nerds & Monsters* (R) 7.05 *Horrid Henry* (R) 7.20 *Wishfart* (R) 7.30 **Scrambled!** (R) **Scrambled! Christmas Special** 7.35 **Scrambled!** (R) **Tom and Jerry Show** (R) 7.50 **Scrambled!** (R) **The Bagel and Becky Show** (R) 8.10 **Scrambled!** (R) **The Powerpuff Girls** (R) 8.30 **Film: Scrambled! Scoby-Doo! Haunted Holidays** (2012) **★★★** 9.05 **Scrambled!** (R) **Horrid Henry** (R) 9.25 **FILM**: *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) **★★★** 11.25 **FILM**: *Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore* (2010) **★** 1.00 **ITV Racing: Live from Kempton**

3.30 E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (1982) **Sci-fi fantasy, with Henry Thomas** **★★★**

5.50 ITV News and Weather

6.10 Emmerdale Diane comforts Robert as he crumbles after reading a thank you card for Seb's presents, and watching from the shadows, Rebecca is struck by his emotion.

6.40 Jurassic World (2015) **Premiere**. A safari park for genetically engineered dinosaurs creates a new species – but it quickly escapes to terrify the tourists. Action adventure sequel, with Chris Pratt. **★★★**

9.00 Coronation Street Eileen keeps vigil over a comatose Billy while worrying about a missing Todd. Daniel finds Adam semi-conscious, and Carla begs Roy not to reveal her secret.

10.00 ITV News and Weather

10.15 Birds of a Feather Christmas Special Tracey's plans could upset the festive harmony. Sharon finds a novel way of doing her Christmas shopping and Doreen has a mystery to solve. Comedy, starring Pauline Quirke. (R)

11.15 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness enlist the aid of Will Mellor, Robbie Williams, Sarah Parish, Emma Willis and Chris Kamara and others as they remake the 1984 classic *Ghostbusters*. (R)

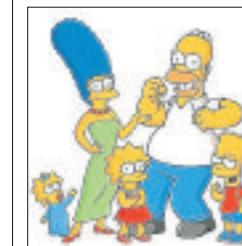
11.45 Al Murray's Make Christmas Great Again

Philosopher, common sense commando, scholar, sage and bald bloke. The Pub Landlord arranges a lock-in with a celebrity guest audience for a lively mix of music and chat. (R)

12.45 Jackpot247 3.00 **Tenable** (R)

3.50 ITV Nightscreen 5.05 **The Jeremy Kyle Show** (R)

CH4



The family recalls stories about disasters at sea, The Simpsons, 10.25am

6.40 **FILM**: *Song of the Sea* (2014) **Animated fantasy, with the voice of Lucy O'Connell** **★★★** 8.25 **FILM**: *Short Circuit* (1986) **Sci-fi comedy adventure, starring Steve Guttenberg** **★★★** 10.25 **The Simpsons** The family recalls stories about disasters at sea. (R) 10.50 **The Simpsons** A department store Santa grants Lisa's Christmas wish. (R) 11.15 **The Simpsons** (R) 11.40 **The Simpsons** Marge loses all memory of Homer. (R) 12.10 **FILM**: *Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel* (2009) **Comedy, starring Zachary Levi** **★★** 1.55 **Channel 4 News** including sport and weather. 2.00 **Child Genius vs Celebrities Christmas Special** Past competitors return to take on a team of celebrities. (R)

3.05 The Great Christmas Bake Off Part one of two. Former contestants compete in a series of festive challenges. (R)

4.20 The Little Mermaid (1989) **Animated adventure, with the voice of Jodi Benson** **★★★**

6.00 Back to the Future (1985) A teenager travels back in time and gets stuck in the 1950s – where he has to make sure his parents fall in love. Sci-fi comedy adventure, with Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd. **★★★**

8.00 Travel Man: 48 Hours in Hong Kong Richard Ayoade is joined by actor Jon Hamm, star of *Mad Men* and *Baby Driver*, for a Yule tide trek around Hong Kong – the most visited and most vertical city on the planet.

9.00 Big Fat Quiz of the Year

2017 Jimmy Carr hosts a comedy quiz looking back at the past 12 months, with panellists Richard Ayoade, Noel Fielding, David Mitchell, Big Narstie, Roisin Conaty and Katherine Ryan.

11.10 Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994) A man's misfortunes in love look set to change when he meets an American beauty at a wedding. Richard Curtis' romantic comedy, starring Hugh Grant, Andie MacDowell and John Hannah. **★★★**

12.00 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.50

The Inbetweeners (R) 2.15 **The Inbetweeners** (R) 2.45 **The Inbetweeners** (R) 3.10 **Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA** (R) 4.00 **Location, Location, Location** (R) 4.55 **Kirstie's Handmade Christmas** (R) 5.10 **FILM**: *Moshi Monsters: The Movie* (2013) **Animated adventure, with the voice of Emma Tate** **★★★**

1.45 SuperCasino Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.05 **Love/Hate** John Boy's deceit sparks a gang war. (R) 4.00 **Now That's Funny!** Internet-sourced videos with an amusing family friendly hook. (R) 4.45 **House Doctor** Highlights of the series. (R) 5.10 **House Busters** A south London home. (R) 5.35 **Wildlife SOS** (R)

CH5



The Strictly Story: Fake Tan, Tangos & a 10 from Len, on at 7.00pm

6.00 **Milkshake!** 9.15 **Access 9.25 Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud** Clips of foul-mouthed parrots and a water-skating squirrel. (R) 10.00 **FILM**: *Short Circuit* (1986) **Sci-fi comedy adventure, starring Steve Guttenberg** **★★★** 10.25 **The Simpsons** The family recalls stories about disasters at sea. (R) 10.50 **The Simpsons** A department store Santa grants Lisa's Christmas wish. (R) 11.15 **The Simpsons** (R) 11.40 **The Simpsons** Marge loses all memory of Homer. (R) 12.10 **FILM**: *Chariots of Fire* (1981) **Oscar-winning drama based on the true story of British runners Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, going for gold at the 1924 Olympics in Paris** **★★★** 1.50 **FILM**: *Balmoreal: A Hidden History* Documentary offering a behind-the-scenes look at the secluded royal retreat that covers 50,000 acres of the Scottish Highlands, and is Queen Elizabeth's favourite home. (R)

4.10 Sandringham: The Queen At Christmas What Christmas is like for the Royal Family on the Sandringham Estate. **5.15 A Royal Night Out** (2015) **Premiere**. Comedy drama, starring Bel Powley and Sarah Gadon. **★★★**

7.00 The Strictly Story: Fake Tan, Tangos & a 10 from Len The tale behind the popular celebrity dance contest, featuring contributions from popular past contestants as well as the show's judges and professional dancers and celebrity fans. (R)

8.30 Dirty Dancing: Making Movie Magic A 30th anniversary celebration of the movie phenomenon, revisiting favourite scenes, discovering what happened on set and hearing from the supporting cast and crew. (R)

10.00 Dirty Dancing (1987) A dance instructor at a 1960s resort teaches a naive teenager about self-expression as they perform in an important show. Romantic drama, with Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey. **★★★**

12.00 Football on 5: The Championship Colin Murray introduces action from the Boxing Day games. 12.55 **Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights** Highlights from the 11th round of matches. 1.45 **SuperCasino** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.05 **Love/Hate** John Boy's deceit sparks a gang war. (R) 4.00 **Now That's Funny!** Internet-sourced videos with an amusing family friendly hook. (R) 4.45 **House Doctor** Highlights of the series. (R) 5.10 **House Busters** A south London home. (R) 5.35 **Wildlife SOS** (R)

Are you Noel or Scrooge?

IS SHROPSHIRE HOME TO THE MOST CHRISTMASY PERSON IN THE UK?

A new study carried out by the British Christmas Tree Growers Association has found that Shrewsbury is a hotspot for the surname Noel – French for Christmas.

It is also home to more people called Stocking than anywhere else in the UK.

Meanwhile, people called Christmas hark from Cambridgeshire, those named Rudolph from Kent, Santa's live in Scotland and all three wise men – Balthazar, Melchior and Caspar – can be found in Bedfordshire.

BCTGA has used national data to find the number of people in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with obvious Christmas surnames.

It has also mapped the hot spots for these surnames around the country.

FUN FACTS

There are 2,417 people with the surname Christmas in the UK.

The first recording of the Christmas name was Ralph Christemasse of Suffolk in 1191.

There is only one Mr Scrooge in the whole world and he lives in Canada.

Meanwhile, there are 228 people worldwide called Grinch and 16 of these live in England.

There is only one person in the UK called Baubles.

Fairies live in Canada.

There are five Mr Christmastrees worldwide – but none in the UK.

The surname Holly originates in Norfolk.

The first time Angel can be found listed as a surname was in Hadleigh, Suffolk, in 1591.

While the majority of Santas live in Moray, Scotland, those called Claus are more likely to live in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

There are 38 people in the UK with the surname Hoho but sadly, none called Hohoho.

The Three Wise men – Balthazar, Melchior and Caspar – may well be friends. Research suggests there are people with all three surnames living in Bedfordshire.

Jesus is alive and well in Cumbria but unlikely to be related by blood to the Messiah.

CHRISTMAS TIPPLES: KNOW YOUR STUFF

If you're cracking open a bottle or two for Christmas, here's a wine glossary of some of the most common wine terms and what they mean.

Wine experts, sommeliers and retailers love to tell us about the wines we should be drinking and enjoying, but what about their wine-tasting notes? Here's our handy guide:

1. Acidity

Good acidity brings crispness to the wine and the right level of acidity stops it from being too sweet or watery.

2. Aftertaste

The flavour that lingers in the mouth.

3. Aperitif

If a wine is described as a good aperitif, it's best enjoyed as a pre-dinner drink rather than with the meal.

4. Balance

When a wine is beautifully balanced, the flavour, acidity, tannins and body enhance each other.

5. Brut

The driest style of sparkling wine with a tiny amount of sugar, while Brut Nature (sometimes referred to as skinny champagne) is a very dry style of fizz without any sugar added at the dosage stage.

6. Dosage

The amount of sugar added to a bottle of fermented sparkling wine after the sediments and dead yeast cells are removed, and before corking, hence a bottle of bubbly might be 'low dosage.'

7. Earthy

Some reds are described as earthy (usually positive) which refers to the dryness in the mouth, and is associated with the soil where the grapes were grown.

8. Flabby

A trendy word for a wine when it's watery with little or no acidity, and one that should be left on the shelf.

9. Fleshy

This is a good word and one we like. It means the wine has ample fruit, texture and body.

10. Herbaceous

If you love a vibrant New Zealand sauvignon blanc, a good style will be deliciously herbaceous, with well balanced flavours and hints of herbs.



Anya Taylor-Joy stars in **The Miniaturist**, on at 9.00pm

6.00 Breakfast News, entertainment and weather reports. 7.45 Match of the Day Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches. (R) 9.15 FILM: **Turbo** (2013) Animated adventure, with the voice of Ryan Reynolds. ★★★ 10.45 FILM: **The Princess and the Frog** (2009) ★★★ 12.15 **Snow Bears** Documentary following polar bears travelling to the North Pole. (R) 1.15 BBC News The latest national and international stories. 1.25 **Midlands Today; Weather** 1.35 Father Brown Sid falls for the heiress to a local brewery. (R) 2.20 FILM: **Shrek 2** (2004) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Mike Myers. ★★★



Documentary about the early years, Oasis: Supersonic, 10.00pm

6.25 **Sign Zone**: Mary Berry's Country House Secrets Mary visits the March family at Goodwood House. (R) 7.25 **Island Parish Shetland** (R) 7.55 FILM: **Bears** (2014) Premiere. Documentary following a family of bears in Alaska. ★★★ 9.10 **The Big Family Cooking Showdown** (R) 10.10 **Nadiya's British Food Adventure** (R) 10.40 **Nadiya's British Food Adventure** (R) 11.10 **The Sweet Makers**: A Georgian Treat (R) 12.10 FILM: **The Red Shoes** (1948) Powell and Pressburger's drama, starring Moira Shearer. ★★★★ 2.20 **The World's Most Extraordinary Homes** Unusual homes built in mountainous regions of the world. (R)



Neil Dudgeon stars, **Midsomer Murders**, 1.00pm

6.00 CITV: **Sooty** (R) 6.10 **The Oddbods Show** (R) 6.15 **Om Nom Stories** (R) 6.20 **Super 4** (R) 6.35 **Super 4** (R) 6.45 **Mr Bean: The Animated Series** (R) 7.00 **Mr Bean: The Animated Series** (R) 7.10 **Horrid Henry** (R) 7.25 FILM: **K-9** (1989) Police comedy, starring James Bolam. ★★ 9.25 FILM: **Twins** (1988) Comedy, with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito. ★★★ 11.25 **Cannonball Christmas Special** (R) 12.25 **You've Been Framed!** Judy Murray toughens up Andy by using him for target practice. 12.55 ITV **Lunchtime News; Weather**. 12.58 **Central News and Weather** 1.00 **Midsomer Murders** A man is stabbed to death during a ghost-hunting party. (R)



Professor Noel treats a poorly penguin, **The Supervet**, on at 7.00pm

6.00 **CITV: Short Circuit 2** (1988) A curious robot meets an old friend and sets off for an adventure in New York. Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Fisher Stevens, with the voice of Tim Blaney. ★★ 8.40 **Lego Masters** The hunt is on for the UK and Ireland's best Lego builders. (R) 9.40 **The Simpsons** With the voice of Frances McDormand. (R) 10.10 **The Simpsons** Grampa Grumps Groundskeeper Willie is forced to move in with the family. (R) 10.35 **The Simpsons** Grampa Grumps Groundskeeper Willie is forced to move in with the family. (R) 10.45 **Small Soldiers** (1998) A computer chip brings a squad of toy soldiers to life, causing mayhem for their owner. Children's adventure, with Kirsten Dunst. ★★★ 11.15 FILM: **Sunshine on Leith** (2013) Musical, starring George MacKay. ★★



Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2017, on at 9.00pm

6.00 **Milkshake!** 9.15 **Cruising with Jane McDonald** The presenter embarks on a series of ocean odysseys. (R) 9.30 **World's Strongest Man 2017** Highlights of the World Tour Finals. 10.30 FILM: **North Sea Hijack** (1979) Thriller, starring Roger Moore. ★★ 12.25 FILM: **Operation Crossbow** (1965) Three engineers parachute into occupied Holland to destroy a missile base – but there is a traitor in their midst. Second World War adventure, with George Peppard and Sophia Loren. ★★★ 2.40 FILM: **Operation: Daybreak** (1975) Fact-based Second World War drama about the killing of leading Nazi Reinhard Heydrich and the search for the assassins. Starring Timothy Bottoms. ★★

3.45 **The Gruffalo** (R)
4.10 **Big Hero 6** (2014)
★★★
5.45 **Pointless** (R)
6.30 BBC News
6.50 **Midlands Today; Weather**
7.00 **Celebrity Mastermind** New series. John Humphrys presents the first in a new series of the classic quiz show, as Jack Ashton, Rich Hall, Guy Mowbray and Pam Ayres face the famous black chair.
7.30 **A Question of Sport: Premier League Special** Sue Barker asks the questions in the light-hearted quiz, with Dion Dublin, Graeme Le Saux, Darren Bent and Alex Scott joining team captains Matt Dawson and Phil Tufnell.

8.00 **Little Women** The March sisters must fend for themselves at home as Marmee is preoccupied with caring for her ailing husband, but the girls face an insurmountable challenge as Beth falls ill.
The Minaturist Two-part adaptation of Jessie Burton's best-selling novel set in 1686. In the second episode, Nella desperately tries to turn the fortunes of the Brandt household around.

10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.20 **Midlands Today; Weather; National Lottery Update**

10.30 **Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special** (R)
11.00 **Not Going Out Christmas Special** (R)

11.40 **Comic Relief 2017: 'Twas the Thanks After Red Nose Day** A compilation looking back at some of the highlights from the 2017 Comic Relief fundraising event, featuring a host of celebrities appearances and comedic routines.

12.40 **Weather for the Week Ahead** 12.45 BBC News

3.20 **Inside the Factory** (R)
4.20 **The Man Who Never Was** (1956) ★★
6.00 **Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise** (R)
7.00 **Dad's Army** Mainwaring finds himself bidding against Pike for an orange at a fundraising bazaar, but the private reveals a stubborn streak that costs the captain dear. (R)
7.30 **Christmas University Challenge 2017** In the third match of the Christmas series, teams of university alumni from the University of York and University of Southampton compete.
8.00 **Six Robots & Us** A unique experiment exploring the latest innovations in robotics, to examine how useful robots can be in enhancing the lives of ordinary families.
9.00 **Alan Partridge: Why, When, Where, How and Whom?** Documentary celebrating 25 years of Steve Coogan's comic creation, featuring contributions from writers and co-stars and previously unseen rehearsal and improv footage.

10.00 **Oasis: Supersonic** (2016) Premiere. Documentary about the early years of the Manchester band, featuring concert footage and first-hand accounts of the sibling rivalry between Noel and Liam Gallagher. ★★★★

11.55 **NFL This Week** Action from the 16th round of fixtures, which included Green Bay Packers v Minnesota Vikings, New Orleans Saints v Atlanta Falcons, and Philadelphia Eagles v Oakland Raiders.
12.45 **Britpop at the BBC** 1.45 **Blur at Glastonbury** (R) 2.45 **Sign Zone**: Joanna & Jennifer: **Absolutely Champs** (R) 3.45 **FILM: Sign Zone: Bill** (2015) ★★★

3.00 **Tenable** A team of five from Cornwall answers questions about top 10 lists. (R)
4.00 **Tipping Point** Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R)
5.00 **The Chase** Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)
6.00 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs** The comedian returns to Battersea Dogs & Cats Home in London, meeting a British bulldog with a leg problem and helping to wash a smelly English mastiff. (R)
6.30 **ITV News Central; Weather**.
6.45 **ITV Evening News; Weather**.
7.00 **Emmerdale** Zak enlists Faith's help in faking the paperwork to save the Dingle home, while Liv is delighted to see that Aaron and Alex are together.
7.30 **Coronation Street** Eileen tries to find out more about Billy's fall. Adam vows to get justice for his mum's death, and Alya discovers why new clients do not want to meet with her.

8.00 **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire** (2005) The teenage wizard is chosen to represent Hogwarts School in a dangerous magical tournament. Fourth instalment of the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Robert Pattinson. ★★★★
10.50 **ITV Evening News; Weather**.
11.04 **ITV Central Weather**
11.05 **Tina & Bobby** Drama about footballer Bobby Moore's life with his childhood sweetheart Tina Dean, from their humble beginnings to superstardom. (R)
12.05 **Get Shirty** (R) 12.55 **Jackpot247** 3.00 **May the Best House Win** (R)

3.10 **Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny**
4.15 **Channel 4 News**
4.30 **Back to the Future Part II** (1989) ★★★
6.30 **Hollyoaks**
7.00 **The Supervet at Christmas** Noel Fitzpatrick is called upon to help a Humboldt penguin chick that needs surgery on its foot. He also treats a cat with a mysterious swelling and a husky has a hip operation. (R)
8.00 **Supershoppers Sales** Special Anna Richardson and Sabrina Grant offer money-saving tips, and investigate some of the slashed prices and discounts from retailers that may not be all they seem.

9.00 **Miranda Does Christmas** A Christmas special hosted by comedian Miranda Hart, featuring a unique gospel choir performance and a festive version of a Destiny's Child classic.
10.00 **First Dates at Christmas** The restaurant hosts a festive party as maître d' Fred and his Christmas Cupids celebrate a year that has seen proposals, engagement rings and the show's very first baby. (R)
11.05 **East Is East** (1999) Two Asian teenagers in 1970s Salford are horrified when their traditionally minded father plans arranged marriages for them. Comedy drama, starring Om Puri and Jimi Mistry. ★★★
12.50 **Very British Problems at Christmas** (R) 1.45 **That's So Last Century** (R) 2.35 **Britain's Favourite Superhero** (R) 4.00 **Location, Location, Location** (R)
4.45 **5.45 Four in a Bed** (R) 5.20 **Kirstie's Handmade Christmas** (R) 5.40 **FILM: Holiday Inn** (1942) (b/w) ★★★

4.55 **The Guns of Navarone** (1961) Second World War adventure, starring Gregory Peck; ★★★ 5 **News Update**
8.00 **World's Strongest Man 2017** Action from the opening heat in Botswana, which featured four former winners including defending champion Brian Shaw – targeting a record-equalling fifth title; 5 **News Update**
9.00 **Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2017** Memorable moments featuring famous faces from the past year, including David Beckham's leaked e-mails, a mishap at the Oscars, and Prue Leith's Great British Bake Off spoilers.

12.00 **Blind Date Christmas Special** A festive edition of the matchmaking show, in which Paul O'Grady gives a real-life Prince Charming a chance to find romance with either Cinderella, Snow White or Tinkerbell. (R) 1.00 **SuperCasino** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.05 **Love/Hate** Trish gives birth on Christmas Eve, while Darren is delighted when Rosie returns to Dublin. However, John Boy is still at war with Fran – and orders Tommy to kill his rival. (R) 4.00 **Cruising with Jane McDonald** The singer embarks on a series of ocean odysseys, beginning with a stop-off at Nassau in the Bahamas, where Jane finds solace in the state's oldest baptist church. (R) 4.45 **House Doctor** Ann Maurice and Alastair Appleton present more highlights from the series, recalling a basement flat in north London desperately in need of tidying up. (R) 5.10 **House Busters** (R) 5.35 **Wildlife SOS** The team treats an owl that refuses to fly and a badger with life-threatening injuries, while Simon tries to free a deer that has become stuck in railings. (R)



CHRISTMAS TIPPLES: KNOW YOUR STUFF

If you're cracking open a bottle or two for Christmas, here's a wine glossary of some of the most common wine terms and what they mean.

Wine experts, sommeliers and retailers love to tell us about the wines we should be drinking and enjoying, but what about their wine-tasting notes? Here's our handy guide:



1. **Acidity** Good acidity brings crispness to the wine and the right level of acidity stops it from being too sweet or watery.

2. **Aftertaste**

The flavour that lingers in the mouth.

3. **Aperitif**

If a wine is described as a good aperitif, it's best enjoyed as a pre-dinner drink rather than with the meal.

4. **Balance**

When a wine is beautifully balanced, the flavour, acidity, tannins and body enhance each other.

5. **Brut**

The driest style of sparkling wine with a tiny amount of sugar, while Brut Nature (sometimes referred to as skinny champagne) is a very dry style of fizz without any sugar added at the dosage stage.

6. **Dosage**

The amount of sugar added to a bottle of fermented sparkling wine after the sediments and dead yeast cells are removed, and before corking, hence a bottle of bubbly might be 'low dosage.'

7. **Earthy**

Some reds are described as earthy (usually positive) which refers to the dryness in the mouth, and is associated with the soil where the grapes were grown.

8. **Flabby**

A trendy word for a wine when it's watery with little or no acidity, and one that should be left on the shelf.

9. **Fleshy**

This is a good word and one we like. It means the wine has ample fruit, texture and body.

10. **Herbaceous**

If you love a vibrant New Zealand sauvignon blanc, a good style will be deliciously herbaceous, with well balanced flavours and hints of herbs.

Polished and party-ready

WE'VE GOT FOUR EASY BUT EFFECTIVE WAYS TO TAP INTO THE SEASON'S MANI MOOD.

After season upon season of nude and neutral polishes ruling the runways, nail art is well and truly back on the beauty map for AW17.

Backstage at the autumn/winter shows, nail technicians got creative with colour, played around with patterns, and even – at Marc Jacobs and Balenciaga – painted tiny logos onto models' nails (yep, the Nineties effect is still in full force). But you don't have to be a master manicurist to copy these looks. We've got four easy-peasy – but very pretty – ways to nail this talon trend...

1. Marc Jacobs' half and half nails

While some models had little MJ monogram manis, others were given a beautiful combination of deep burgundy and dark gold split on the diagonal to complement the Seventies-inspired collection. Recreate the look by starting with a coat of Nailberry Dial M for Maroon and then, after letting it dry, using a small strip of masking tape to create a diagonal section and painting Ciate Goal Digger over the top. Nailberry Dial M for Maroon, £14.50 (nailberry.co.uk); Ciate Goal Digger, £9 (ciatelondon.com).



2. Sophia Webster's frosted French mani

'Frosted tips' doesn't just mean the terrible Nineties hair trend – it's also the Sophia Webster AW17 sparkly nail look, inspired by the show's ice queen theme, and it's rather enchanting. Lead nail technician Rebecca Jade Wilson created the look by starting with a base of Orly Rose-Coloured Glasses and adding loose glitter on the nail tips. Barry M's new Whimsical Dreams glitter polish, launching this month, is perfect for recreating the effect.

Orly Rose-Coloured Glasses, £9.95 (NailPolishDirect); Barry M Classic Glitter Nail Paint in Whimsical Dreams, £3.99 (Superdrug, available September 20).

3. Mulberry's mirror mani

The simplest way to jump on the nail art bandwagon? Make like the models on the Mulberry catwalk with a chic metallic finish. Right on cue, Soigné has just released its long-awaited Le Miroir, just about the shiniest polish we've ever seen. It's limited-edition, so snap one up while you can.

Soigné Le Miroir, £23 (soignenails.com)

4. House of Holland's picnic wraps

By far the most intricate nail art of the season was seen at House of Holland, where tiny rectangular rhinestones were glued side by side on false nails, to create a 3D gingham effect to fit with the Dolly Parton meets Las Vegas-themed show. You don't have to go to all that effort however, because as part of the brand's continued collaboration with Elegant Touch, House of Holland has created ready-made press-ons in adorable red and blue gingham.

Elegant Touch House of Holland Picnic Pincers, £7.50 (eleganttouch.com)

WITH PARTY SEASON APPROACHING, IT'S TIME TO TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND REASSESS YOUR BEAUTY STATION.

With so many lights, baubles and mirrored decorations on display at this time of year, it's hardly surprising we want to glam ourselves up as much as the festive frou-frou, and reinvent the art of getting ready.

To set the mood and help you shine as much as the tinsel on the trees, we've eyed up the best dressing tables, vanity units and beauty bars, so you can pamper and preen in style...

1. Ekby Valter/Ekby Hemnes Wall Shelf, £16; Lots Mirror, £4.99 for pack of four; Pax Wardrobe, £130, and Lillholm Wall Lamp, £12, IKEA

2. Malm Desk, £95; Godmorgon Mirror, £35, and Ledsjo LED Wall Lamp, £42, IKEA

3. Linea Medium Light Up Star, £25, House of Fraser

4. Pearl Arc Hangers, £12.95 for set of three, House of Bath

5. Pimlico Dressing Table Mirror, £195, The White Company

6. Stonedust Brush Holder, £24; Set of Make Up Brushes, £38 for pack of five with compact mirror, Oliver Bonas

7. Lund Allure Mirror with Tray, £60, Amara

Thursday, December 28

Early View



Granville faces being left alone at Christmas, Still Open All Hours, 7.30pm



Steve Coogan stars, Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa, on at 11.30pm



Bradley Walsh hosts the quiz show, The Chase, on at 5.00pm



Joel confides in Sienna about his feelings, Hollyoaks, on at 6.30pm



Action from the second heat, World's Strongest Man 2017, on at 8.00pm

Prime Time

3.45 The Gruffalo's Child (R)
4.10 How to Train Your Dragon 2 (2014) ★★★
5.45 Pointless (R)
6.30 BBC News
6.45 Midlands Today; Weather
7.00 Celebrity Mastermind
7.30 Still Open All Hours

New series. Granville faces being left alone at Christmas as all his friends and neighbours make plans to go away – leaving him at the amorous mercy of Mrs Featherstone.
8.00 EastEnders Fi breaks into Willmott-Brown's office to find out the truth about her father, while he tries to manipulate Kathy. Karen reaches out to her sister for financial help.
8.30 Little Women Jo feels snubbed when Amy is chosen over her to accompany Aunt Carroll's daughter on a tour of Europe, so she flees to New York to pursue her career. Last in the series.
9.30 EastEnders Fi is sickened to discover how low her family have sunk. Linda is hell-bent on finding another local pub to manage and Bernadette tells Kandise about the family's money troubles.

10.00 BBC News
10.15 Midlands Today
10.25 Bruno Mars: Live in Harlem
11.10 U2 at the BBC The band performs some of their biggest hits at Abbey Road Studios, alongside tracks from their latest album, Songs of Experience, and chat to Cat Deeley about their lives. (R)
12.25 Weather for the Week Ahead 12.30 BBC News

3.55 Inside the Factory (R)
4.55 The Heroes of Telemark (1965) ★★★
7.00 Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise Exploring the forests, plains and cities of Central Thailand, and revealing how the nation's people find spiritual fulfilment in their relationships with animals. (R)
8.00 Christmas University Challenge 2017 Teams from the University of Leicester and UCL compete, with Paralympian Danielle Brown, Sky at Night presenter Pete Lawrence and the BBC's Jeremy Bowen among the contestants.
8.30 Six Robots & Us Part two of two. The experts deliver more robots to families around the UK, including a north London couple who receive a machine designed to help their autistic four-year-old.
9.30 Attenborough and the Empire of the Ants David Attenborough tells the story of two physically identical species of ant that have two very different strategies to survive the harsh environment of the Swiss Alps.

10.30 Romesh Ranganathan: Irrational Live The comedian's first-ever live stand-up show, in which the Bafta-nominated star takes shots at everyone from his children to a stranger in a coffee shop.
11.30 Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa (2013) The hapless local radio DJ ends up in the middle of a siege when a colleague responds to being fired by taking hostages. Comedy, starring Steve Coogan. ★★★
12.55 FILM: Oasis: Supersonic (2016) ★★★ 2.55 Sign Zone: Employable Me (R)

3.00 Tenable Quiz, hosted by Warwick Davis. (R)
4.00 Tipping Point Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R)
5.00 The Chase Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)
6.00 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs The comedian tries to train three huge puppies that spent the first five months of their lives being raised by a homeless man, and sets out to reunite a Jack Russell with its owner. (R)
6.30 ITV News Central; Weather.
6.45 ITV Evening News; Weather.
7.00 Emmerdale Rebecca confesses her plans. Jimmy and Nicola receive a tempting offer, and Bernice prepares for her date.
8.00 Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2007) The wizard forms his fellow pupils into a secret army to battle the resurrected Lord Voldemort. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Gary Oldman. ★★★
10.35 ITV News; Weather.
10.54 ITV Central Weather

10.55 Tina & Bobby The West Ham player leads England to World Cup glory at Wembley and fame and fortune follow, as the couple become icons of their time. Lorne MacFadyen and Michelle Keegan star. (R)
11.55 Stuck on You: The Football Sticker Story How four Italian brothers took a childhood obsession and turned it into a worldwide industry – and the British upstarts who took on the mighty Panini to beat them at their own game. (R)
12.45 Jackpot247 3.00 Tenable (R) 3.50 ITV Nightscreen

3.00 Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny
4.00 Channel 4 News
4.20 Back to the Future Part III (1990) ★★★
6.30 Hollyoaks
7.00 We're Going on a Bear Hunt Animated adventure based on Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury's popular children's story, featuring the voices of Olivia Colman, Pam Ferris and Mark Williams. (R)
7.30 The Secret Life of the Zoo at Christmas Chester Zoo's keepers are busy making gifts for all the animals, and it is a chaotic free-for-all when the festive parcels are handed over to the chimps. (R)
8.30 The Secret Life of 5 Year Olds on Holiday One-off special in which familiar faces from the observational series are shown away from the classroom as they and their families jet off to the Sunwing resort in Cyprus.
9.00 What Britain Bought in 2017 Mary Portas surveys Britain's spending habits over the past 12 months, and looks back at some of the retail stories such as the popularity of Prosecco and the fidget spinner.
10.00 The Undateables at Christmas Familiar faces from the dating show share their extra special plans for the festive season, with Daniel from Brighton busy planning the release of his latest single. (R)
11.05 About a Boy (2002) A womaniser who poses as a father to meet single women changes his ways after befriending a lonely youngster. Romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Toni Collette and Nicholas Hoult. ★★★

11.45 The Taking of Pelham 123 (2009) Criminals hijack a crowded New York subway train and threaten to kill the passengers unless they are paid \$10million. Thriller remake, with Denzel Washington and John Travolta. ★★★
1.45 SuperCasino Live interactive gaming. 3.05 Love/Hate The gang members' lives spiral out of control. (R) 4.00 Cruising with Jane McDonald Highlights of Jane's tour of Alaska, America's largest state. (R) 9.30 The Gadget Show (R) 10.25 FILM: The 7th Voyage of Sinbad (1958) Fantasy adventure, with Kerwin Mathews. ★★★ 12.15 FILM: The Vikings (1958) A Norse warrior fights to claim the Northumbrian throne, unaware his rival for the crown is really his half-brother. Adventure, with Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh. ★★★ 2.30 FILM: Jason and the Argonauts (1963) The son of an overthrown king battles monsters during an epic voyage in search of a magical golden fleece. Fantasy adventure, with Todd Armstrong and Honor Blackman. ★★★

4.30 André Rieu: My Life in Music Profile of the Dutch violinist. (R)
6.00 André Rieu: Christmas in London A festive concert by the Dutch violinist and the Johann Strauss Orchestra, featuring carols as well as songs including Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah and the Concierto de Aranjuez. (R)
7.00 Winter in Alaska Documentary following four seasons in the north American state, beginning with winter, where snowfall is measured in feet rather than inches; (R) 5 News Update
8.00 World's Strongest Man 2017 Action from the second heat in Botswana, which featured Iceland's Hafthor Julius Björnsson, a man who has stood on the podium five times but has never been crowned champion; 5 News Tonight
9.00 Flight (2012) Premiere. A pilot is hailed as a hero for bringing a malfunctioning plane down safely – until it emerges he was drunk at the controls. Drama, with Denzel Washington and Don Cheadle. ★★★
11.45 The Taking of Pelham 123 (2009) Criminals hijack a crowded New York subway train and threaten to kill the passengers unless they are paid \$10million. Thriller remake, with Denzel Washington and John Travolta. ★★★

1.45 SuperCasino Live interactive gaming. 3.05 Love/Hate The gang members' lives spiral out of control. (R) 4.00 Cruising with Jane McDonald A Lilliputian lop-e round the Inner Hebrides puts Jane in touch with her Scottish roots. (R) 4.45 House Doctor A slightly neglected 200-year-old cottage. (R) 5.10 House Busters (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)

Time for a clean up!

FORGET JANUARY, THE BEST TIME TO OVERHAUL YOUR HABITS IS WINTER. LIZ CONNOR ASKS THE EXPERTS FOR THEIR TOP TIPS.

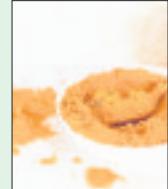
It's tempting to spend all winter hibernating on the sofa with a glass of wine, your only exercise being the slow shuffle to and from the fridge in between Netflix episodes.

That's why winter is secretly the best time to get your health mojo back. Here, three health and wellness experts reveal their top tips for keeping motivated and giving yourself a winter health reboot.

1. Have an alternative spring clean

Many of us traditionally celebrate the end of winter with a good old spring clean, but why not start as you mean to go by doing the same as winter looms?

"Clear out your cupboards and stock up on the foods that will help to promote winter wellness and give you the ingredients to create delicious dishes that will support your body's health as the temperature drops," advises nutritionist Rob Hobson.



Spices such as cinnamon, smoked paprika, turmeric, raw cacao and chilli powder offer warming flavours.

2. Keep an Instagram diary

"Use Instagram as a gratitude diary by taking a photo every day of something you feel grateful for," says health psychologist Dr Meg Aroll.

"Studies have shown that appreciating and noting down what we are thankful for enhances our overall satisfaction with life and lifts mood, leading us to feel more refreshed in the mornings."

3. Make the most of winter sports

Dr Aroll suggests finding a new hobby that celebrates winter, such as ice skating, snow kiting or indoor skiing.

"You could also consider doing something for the community, like volunteering. Nothing lifts the spirits more than helping others in need, and Christmas can be a significantly lonely time of year for many people."

4. Eat for the weather

When the weather's gloomy and you're feeling depressed, it can really impact on your appetite and food choices, which may leave you lacking in essential nutrients. Instead top up on B vitamins with wholegrains, oily fish, eggs, and dark green leafy vegetables.

5. Try getting out for a run

"A bracing winter breeze can be quite invigorating and prompt your body to release endorphins, which reduce your pain response and will put you in a great mood," says orthopaedic surgeon Dr Dan Robertson.

FORGET CURLY KALE, IT'S SOOOOO 2017. LEEKS ARE THE NEW SUPERFOOD – APPARENTLY

From keeping sore throats at bay to improving the quality of the singing voice, leeks have long been known as the fat-free, nutrient rich answer to staying healthy and helping to combat winter colds.



Leek season is in full swing and they have been named as the 'new' superfood. According to posh supermarket Waitrose, it's all change in the culinary landscape of 2018.

Next year we'll be tucking into peanut butter, dark green veggies, turmeric and blueberries. Hopefully not in the same meal.

Waitrose has also revealed that shoppers' changing attitudes to eating and shopping.

The supermarket predicts tapas style Indian street food like smoked, grilled or seared delicacies, scallops or pickled ginger, are set to become in vogue for adventurous diners, alongside hearty, indulgent, 'dude food' from Japan like yakitori skewered chicken and deep-fried tofu in broth.

Jane Orchard, manager of Waitrose Store Innovation says: "In these few years we've seen a marked shift in grocery shopping behaviour. Everyone's lives are busier than ever. And this coupled with more convenient ways to buy food – especially technological developments – mean people don't need to plan in advance." Waitrose has also predicted that food shopping habits will make a seismic shift with supermarkets becoming a more experiential retail space and the likes of wine bars and supper clubs becoming more popular.

BBC 1



Rob Brydon hosts the comedy panel show, *Would I Lie to You?* 8.30pm

6.00 Breakfast News, entertainment and weather reports. 9.00 FILM: *Monsters vs Aliens* (2009) Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Reese Witherspoon. ★★★ 10.25 *Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas* (R) 10.55 FILM: *Kung Fu Panda 2* (2011) Animated comedy sequel, with the voice of Jack Black. ★★★ 12.15 *Bargain Hunt* From Buitll Wells, Powys. (R) 12.45 BBC News at One; Weather 1.00 Midlands Today; Weather 1.10 *Father Brown* The priest investigates the murder of a B-movie director. (R) 1.55 *Revoltting Rhymes* The second of two animations based on Roald Dahl's children's book. (R) 2.25 FILM: *Up* (2009) Animated adventure, with the voice of Ed Asner. ★★★★

BBC 2



Frankie Boyle's 2017 New Year World Order, on at 10.00pm

6.35 *Sign Zone: MasterChef: The Professionals* Challenges include making a fruit-based dessert. (R) 7.35 FILM: *G-Force* (2009) Children's adventure, starring Bill Nighy. ★★ 8.55 *The Big Family Cooking Showdown* (R) 9.55 Nadiya's British Food Adventure (R) 10.25 Nadiya's British Food Adventure (R) 10.55 Puerto Rico – Island of Enchantment: *Natural World* (R) 11.55 FILM: *Three Coins in the Fountain* (1954) Romantic drama, starring Dorothy McGuire. ★★★ 1.35 *Nature's Weirdest Events* The town brought to a standstill by a swarm of flying insects. (R) 2.05 *The World's Most Extraordinary Homes* A house in Canada inspired by two ships in dry dock. (R)

ITV



Warwick Davis hosts the quiz show, *Tenable*, on at 3.00pm

6.00 *Good Morning Britain* Ventriloquist and America's Got Talent winner Paul Zerdin talks about his stint in panto. Plus, news and current affairs, plus health, entertainment and lifestyle features. 8.30 *Lorraine* Entertainment and fashion news. 9.25 *Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury* The presenter ventures towards Cumbria's High Cup Nick. (R) 9.50 FILM: *Everything or Nothing: The Untold Story of 007* (2012) Documentary about the making of the James Bond films. ★★★ 1.45 *Bond Girls Are Forever* The thrill of being a Bond girl. (R) 12.45 *ITV Lunchtime News*; Weather. 12.55 *ITV News Central*; Weather. 1.00 *Midsomer Murders* A man is mauled to death by a wild boar. (R)

CH4



Ashley Jensen guests, Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast, on at 8.00pm

7.05 FILM: *Black Nativity* (2013) Musical, starring Jacob Latimore. ★★★ 8.50 *Lego Masters* The teams compete in two challenges on the theme of nature. (R) 9.50 *The Simpsons* Bart develops a sense of civic pride. (R) 10.20 *The Simpsons* Springfield gets a new telephone code. (R) 10.50 *The Simpsons* Homer and Marge dispense marital advice. (R) 11.15 FILM: *Hotel for Dogs* (2009) An orphaned brother and sister in foster care transform an abandoned hotel into luxury accommodation for stray dogs. Family comedy, with Emma Roberts, Jake T Austin and Don Cheadle. ★★★ 1.20 FILM: *Cutthroat Island* (1995) Swashbuckling adventure, with Geena Davis. ★★

CH5



Action from the third heat, *World's Strongest Man* 2017, on at 8.00pm

6.00 *Milkshake!* 9.00 FILM: *Arthur 2: On the Rocks* (1988) The drunken millionaire is bankrupt, while his wife wants to have a baby and pushes him into taking responsibility for once. Comedy sequel, with Dudley Moore and Liza Minnelli. ★ 11.10 FILM: *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (1988) Two rival conmen on the French Riviera make a wager over who will be the first to trick a glamorous heiress out of her fortune. Comedy, starring Michael Caine and Steve Martin. ★★★ 1.20 FILM: *Labyrinth* (1986) A teenager travels through a magical maze to rescue her baby brother from a band of goblins and their sinister king. Fantasy adventure, starring Jennifer Connelly and David Bowie. ★★★

3.50 *Room on the Broom* (R)

4.20 *Brave* (2012) ★★★

5.45 *Pointless* (R)

6.30 BBC News at Six; Weather

6.45 Midlands Today; Weather

7.00 Celebrity Mastermind

Actor John Bradley, hockey player Crista Cullen, Radio 1Xtra presenter Nick Bright and Hollyoaks actress Anna Passey compete in the specialist and general knowledge quiz.

7.30 *Tim Vine Travels Through Time Christmas Special* Tim journeys back in time to Tudor England in a quest to find a silver lion and bring Christmas to Henry VIII's court. Comedy, guest starring Emma Bunton and the Rev Richard Coles.

8.00 *EastEnders* Mick has to decide whether he is part of Aidan's gang, Carmel and Shakil put paid to Kush and Denise's hopes of a quiet night in, and the Vic regulars see the year out with a bang.

8.30 *Would I Lie to You?* Rob Brydon hosts the comedy panel show, with Steve Davis, Craig Parkinson, Sara Pascoe and Claudia Winkleman joining team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack.

9.00 BBC News

9.10 Midlands Today; Weather; National Lottery Update

9.15 *Gone Girl* (2014)

Premiere. A man reports his wife's disappearance, only to end up under media scrutiny and accused of murder. David Fincher's crime thriller, with Ben Affleck. ★★★

11.40 *Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show* The comedy star concludes his entertainment showcase with a festive special. (R)

12.45 Weather for the Week Ahead 12.50 BBC News

3.05 *Inside the Factory* (R)

4.05 *The Desert Fox* (1951) (b/w) ★★★

5.30 *Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise* (R)

6.30 *Christmas University Challenge 2017*

7.00 *Morecambe & Wise: Leading Ladies*

Penelope Keith presents a compilation of highlights from the comedy duo's shows featuring appearances by female stars of stage and screen. (R)

8.00 *Eric & Ernie's Home Movies* Footage of Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise's home movies, chronicling their rise to fame as well as recording key moments in their private lives.

9.00 *Vic & Bob's Big Night Out* Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer present an updated version of *Vic Reeves Big Night Out*, featuring new and old characters and a healthy dose of slapstick humour.

9.30 *Live at the Apollo* Katherine Ryan hosts a festive instalment from the stage of London's Hammersmith Apollo, featuring Marlon Davis, Joel Dommett and John Robbins. Last in the series.

10.00 *Frankie Boyle's 2017 New Year World Order* The comedian tries to make sense of the past 12 months.

10.30 *QIXL* With Jason Manford, Romesh Ranganathan and Holly Walsh.

11.15 *The Great Gatsby* (2013) A naive writer befriends a decadent millionaire and slowly uncovers the dark underside of his lavish lifestyle. Period drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tobey Maguire. ★★★

1.35 *Sign Zone: Doctor Who* (R)

2.35 FILM: *Sign Zone: Cinderella* (2015) ★★★ 4.30 *This Is BBC Two*

3.00 *Tenable*

A team of five from Merseyside answers questions. Last in the series. (R)

4.00 *Tipping Point*

Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R)

5.00 *The Chase*

Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)

6.00 *Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs*

A puppy is rushed to the clinic when an injury comes to light just days after arriving at Battersea, while Paul pampers a Yorkie terrier that has been given up by its owner. (R)

6.30 *ITV News Central*; Weather

6.45 *ITV Evening News*; Weather

7.00 *Emmerdale*

The Dingles get ready, and Bernice makes arrangements.

7.30 *Coronation Street*

Roy begs Carla not to return to Devon and to move in with him instead, and Adam offers to help Geraldine get Summer taken away from Todd and Billy.

8.00 *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009)

The wizard must uncover the secrets of Lord Voldemort's past to try to end the evil sorcerer's reign of terror. Fantasy adventure sequel, with Daniel Radcliffe and Michael Gambon. ★★★

10.50 *ITV News*; Weather

11.09 *ITV Central Weather*

11.10 *Tina & Bobby*

The former England star winds up managing a lowly non-league side, and Tina dismisses rumours he's having an affair – until her worst fears are confirmed. Last in the series. (R)

12.10 *Bear's Mission with Rob Brydon* (R)

1.05 *Jackpot247*

1.05 *Interactive gaming*

3.00 100 Year Old Drivers (R)

3.50 *ITV Nightscreen*

Text-based information service.

3.40 *Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny*

Items include a Second World War Tommy Gun.

4.45 *Channel 4 News*

5.00 *The Simpsons*

Lisa joins a group of eco-radicals. (R)

5.30 *The Simpsons*

Mr Burns hires Homer to play pranks. (R)

6.00 *Hollyoaks*

Tom celebrates his birthday at The Loft.

7.00 *Travel Man: 48 Hours in Hong Kong*

Richard Ayoade is joined by actor Jon Hamm, star of Mad Men and Baby Driver, for a Yule tide trek around Hong Kong – the most visited and most vertical city on the planet. (R)

8.00 *Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast*

Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty are joined by Ashley Jensen, who learns to make authentic Umbrian pasta with truffle. Jimmy also helps the RNLI create the perfect fundraising feast.

9.00 *8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special*

Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy panel show's version of the words and numbers quiz, with Jon Richardson and Catherine Tate teaming up against Sean Lock and Joe Wilkinson.

10.00 *Gogglebox 2017*

Highlights from the most recent series, featuring the armchair critics' reactions to The Crystal Maze, the Weakest Link Celebrity Special, and Mary Berry's Country House Secrets. (R)

12.05 FILM: *I Give It a Year* (2013)

★★★ 1.55 FILM: *The River Wild* (1994) ★★★ 3.50 *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA* (R) 4.35

4.35 *Four in a Bed* (R)

5.00 *Jamie's Cracking Christmas* (R)

5.15 FILM: *The Three Musketeers* (1973) ★★★

3.20 *Look Who's Talking* (1989)

Comedy, starring Kirstie Alley.

5.10 *Footloose* (1984)

Drama, starring Kevin Bacon. ★★★

7.00 *Winter in Yorkshire*

As winter takes its toll, cameras follow grey seal pups at Ravenscar beach, and the progress of many short-eared owls that land on the moors; (R) 5 News Update

8.00 *World's Strongest Man*

2017 Action from the third heat in Botswana, which featured six tasks including the 15-tonne Bus Pull, the 350kg Dead Lift and the 200kg Elephant Carry; 5 News Update

9.00 *Victoria Wood: Live By Her Friends*

Profile of the writer and comedian, featuring clips of some of the funniest performances of her 40-year career and contributions from friends, fans and co-stars.

10.00 *Victoria Wood: Live 1997*

The comedian performs stand-up and sketches, recorded during Victoria's 1997 tour and acclaimed as one of the very best stand-up shows of the decade. (R)

12.00 *SuperCasino*

Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.05 *Love/Hate* Nidge seizes his opportunity to take control of the gang and sets about getting his cohorts back to business and Mary discovers the extent of Luke's obsession. Last in the series. (R)

4.00 *Winter in Alaska*

Documentary following four seasons in the north American state, beginning with winter, where snowfall is measured in feet rather than inches. (R) 4.45 *House Doctor* A bachelor pad in Knutsford, Cheshire. (R) 5.10 *House Busters* Life-enhancing changes to a home. (R) 5.35 *Wildlife SOS* The work of volunteers at an animal sanctuary. (R)

How to cut the calories

KEEP YOUR WAISTLINE TRIM WITH THESE CHRISTMAS FOOD ALTERNATIVES.

If you don't want your diet derailed by Christmas foods, follow Superfooduk.com nutritionist Shona Wilkinson's top tips for a healthy Christmas diet with these nifty food swaps...

1. Swap: Roasted potatoes in goose fat for roasted parsnips with paprika

Potatoes are classed as root vegetables, but they don't count towards your 5-a-day as they mainly contribute starch to the diet. 100g of roasted potatoes in goose fat contains 316 kcal and 13.5g of fat.

Parsnip is also a starchy vegetable, however it still counts towards your 5-a-day because it's a source of vitamins and minerals. Adding the paprika gives an extra nutritional boost as well as making them delicious. It is very high in beta carotene, which the body converts to vitamin A. One tablespoon of paprika will give you 70% of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin A.



2. Swap: Pigs in blankets for Parma ham and asparagus

Pigs in blankets are sausages wrapped in bacon. They are then generally fried, making their fat content quite high, 19.3g of fat per 100g. They also contain 289kcal. Why not swap this unhealthy dish for Parma ham wrapped asparagus? The fibre content of the asparagus helps support healthy digestion and 100g of it only contains 13 kcal. Add in around four slices of Parma ham and you are still under 10g of fat and around 136 kcal.

3. Swap: Mince pies for Pavlova

One mince pie can have up to 350kcal, almost 17g of fat and a whopping 20g of sugar (five teaspoons!). A Pavlova with fruit and cream has slightly less calories, with 288 kcal and 13.2g of fat. It is however much higher in sugar, so my suggestion would be to ask for the fresh fruit with a little bit of cream (as the majority of the sugar is coming from the Pavlova base).

4. Swap: Stilton and port for goats' cheese and grapes

Stilton cheese has a high fat and calorie content; 100g contains 362 kcal and 31g of fat. Adding a glass of port to this snack bumps up the calories another 165kcal. Swap this for goats' cheese, which has slightly less calories and less fat; 100g contains 320 kcal and 25g fat. Add some grapes instead of the port and it's less than half the calories - and it's better for your liver.

5. Swap: Eggnog for prosecco

Eggnog is higher in calories; 145 kcal and 9g of sugar per serving. Prosecco per glass (approx. 125ml) has only 75 kcal and around 1g of sugar. Either option should be drunk in moderation as they both contain alcohol.

6. Swap: Chocolate log for Pannettone

Chocolate log is calorie-rich, with 100g having 453kcal and 22.8g of fat. Swap it for Pannettone (287kcal and 5.3g per 100g).

7. Swap: Honey glazed ham for smoked salmon

The calories and fat content are similar between these two products. However, smoked salmon is a better choice as it's rich in omega 3 essential fatty acids.

8. Swap: Stollen for roasted chestnuts

One slice has 254kcal, and is high in fat and sugar. Eating 10 roasted chestnuts instead will provide just over 200kcal, and only 1.85g of fat, less than 9g of sugar, and almost 3g of protein.

Meanwhile, Britain's favourite alcoholic drink is officially wine - after it supplanted beer as the nation's most popular tipple. In a poll last year, six out of 10 people chose wine as their 'drink of choice' as couples increasingly spend evenings at home, rather than at the pub.

Wine buff and chief executive of the Wine and Spirits Trade Association, Miles Beale, said the figures were proof wine was "no longer just for connoisseurs". But beer bosses baulked at the claims from the YouGov poll that beer's popularity is on the wane.

Beer sales were up for the first time in a decade in 2016, by 1.3 per cent in comparison to 2015.

Research has shown that as people consume less alcohol overall, they are also deciding to drink more frequently at home rather than going out and choosing to drink sparkling wines, such as Prosecco, or a glass of red. And it's reflected in sales, too. Retail analysts Nielson said demand from British buyers for Argentinian wine soared by 35 per cent last year.

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

Saturday, December 30

BBC 1



John Humphries hosts, *Celebrity Mastermind*, on at 5.50pm

BBC 2



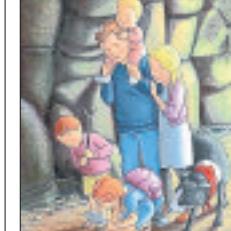
Mia Wasikowska stars, *Alice in Wonderland* on at 6.20pm

ITV



Ant & Dec feature in, *Who Shot Simon Cowell?* on at 6.30pm

CH4



Animated adventure, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, on at 11.50am

CH5



Colin Murray presents, *Football on 5: The Championship*, 9.05pm

6.00 **Milkshake!** 10.50 **FILM: The African Queen** (1951) A missionary and a drunken captain make a perilous journey through Africa at the outbreak of the First World War. Romantic adventure, starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn. ★★★★ 12.55 **FILM: Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes** (1984) A man raised by apes after his shipwrecked parents are killed is helped by an explorer to return to England and claim his birthright. Drama, with Christopher Lambert and Ian Holm. ★★★

3.30 **Live Aviva Premiership Rugby Union**

6.05 **World's Strongest Man 2017**

7.00 *Blind Date* New series. Paul O'Grady returns with the revived dating show, and invites one batch of singletons to bring their dogs along in the hopes of scoring some "puppy love".

8.00 *Greatest Celebrity Wind-Ups Ever!* New series. Joe Pasquale narrates a special documentary celebrating some of the greatest pranks celebrities have managed to play on each other.

9.00 *5 News Weekend* Round-up of the day's headlines from around the world.

9.05 *Football on 5: The Championship* Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Middlesbrough v Aston Villa and Bristol City v Wolverhampton Wanderers.

10.15 *Football on 5: Goal Rush* Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Blackburn Rovers v Scunthorpe United and Blackpool v Plymouth Argyle.

10.45 *How Magic Changed TV* The story of magic on television, featuring a look back at how performers like Paul Daniels, Penn & Teller, Derren Brown, David Blaine and Dynamo transformed the art form. (R)

12.15 *SuperCasino* 3.10 **Our Dream Hotel** 4.00 **Our Dream Hotel** 4.45 **House Doctor** (R) 5.10 **Wildlife SOS** (R) 5.35 **Chinese Food in Minutes** (R) 5.50 **Access** (R)

New Year's Eve

Early View

BBC 1



Hugh Jackman guests, The Graham Norton Show, 10.20pm

6.00 Breakfast A round-up of national and international news, plus sports reports, weather forecasts and arts and entertainment features. 8.00 Match of the Day Highlights of Liverpool v Leicester City. (R) 9.25 FILM: Bolt (2008) Animated adventure, with the voice of John Travolta. ★★★ 10.55 FILM: The Croods (2013) Animated comedy, with the voice of Nicolas Cage. ★★★ 12.25 BBC News: Weather. 12.40 Comic Relief 2017: 'Twas the Thanks After Red Nose Day Fun and games from the O2, London. (R) 1.40 FILM: Bedknobs and Broomsticks (1971) Disney part-animated musical fantasy, starring Angela Lansbury and David Tomlinson. ★★★

BBC 2



Dara O Briain hosts, Robot Wars Special 2017: The World Series, 7.00pm

6.35 Birds of Paradise: The Ultimate Quest (R) 7.35 FILM: Mars Needs Moms (2011) Animated sci-fi adventure, with the voice of Seth Rogen. Dusky. ★★ 9.00 The Big Family Cooking Showdown (R) 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites Matt Tebbutt presents highlights of the series. 11.30 The A to Z of TV Cooking (R) 12.15 FILM: Shall We Dance? (2004) Romantic comedy, starring Richard Gere and Susan Sarandon. ★★ 1.55 Six Robots & Us Part two of A north London couple receive a robot to help their autistic four-year-old. (R) 2.55 Talking Pictures: Anthony Hopkins A look back at the career of the actor through interviews conducted with the BBC. (R)

ITV



Radzi Chinyanganya hosts, Cannonball Splash Hits, on at 6.50pm

6.00 CITV: Sooty. (R) 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street (R) 6.20 Bottom Knocker Street (R) 6.35 Dino Dana (R) 6.45 Super 4 (R) 7.00 Ultimate Spider-Man Vs The Sinister Six 7.20 The Tom and Jerry Show (R) 7.30 The Tom and Jerry Show (R) 7.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.00 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.15 Horrid Henry (R) 8.30 A Grizzly New Year's Tale: The Crystal Eye (R) 8.55 Scrambled! Record Breakers 9.25 Countrywise (R) 9.50 FILM: Casino Royale (1967) ★ 12.25 ITV News and Weather: Weather. 12.30 All Star Musicals Celebrities perform famous songs from musicals. (R) 2.20 A Very Royal Wedding The marriage of the Queen and Prince Philip. (R) Edited for language. ★★★

CH4



The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Christmas Special, on at 8.00pm

7.35 Frasier The brothers argue over Christmas. (R) 8.00 Frasier Frederick announces he is unable to visit at Christmas. (R) 8.25 F1 2017: Hamilton's Record Breaking Season A look back at the 2017 Formula One season. (R) 9.30 Sunday Brunch Tim Lovejoy and Simon Rimmer are joined by guests Joe Lycett, Florence Pugh and Harry Hill. With music from the Big Moon. 12.30 The Simpsons Homer is transformed into a genius. (R) 12.55 The Simpsons Homer discovers Grampa may not be his father. (R) 1.25 The Simpsons Marge is arrested. (R) 1.55 FILM: We Bought a Zoo (2011) Fact-based comedy drama, starring Matt Damon and Scarlett Johansson. Murray. ★★★

CH5



The history of the toy, The Lego Story: Brick by Brick, on at 7.00pm

6.00 Milkshake! 10.20 Football on 5: The Championship Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship. (R) 11.25 Football on 5: Goal Rush Highlights of Blackburn Rovers v Scunthorpe United. (R) 12.00 Winter in Alaska Documentary following four seasons in the north American state. (R) 12.55 FILM: Three Men and a Little Lady (1990) A trio of surrogate dads rush to stop the girl in their care from being whisked away abroad by her mother. Comedy sequel, starring Tom Selleck. ★★★ 2.55 FILM: Groundhog Day (1993) Comedy, starring Bill Murray. ★★★

Prime Time

3.35 Songs of Praise: The Big Sing 4.05 Top of the Pops New Year Special 5.05 Attenborough and the Giant Elephant (R) 6.05 BBC News 6.20 Midlands Today; Weather; 6.30 Celebrity Mastermind 7.00 Countryfile Adam Henson takes a trip to New Zealand, where he helps with a cattle muster, goes on the hunt for a rare breed of goat, and witnesses large-scale sheep farming.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow Fiona Bruce presents a special episode from the set of EastEnders celebrating the history of film, theatre, music and television, in which iconic props are brought in to be valued.

9.00 The Real Marigold on Tour Rosemary Shrager, Sheila Ferguson, Paul Nicholas and Dennis Taylor explore Thailand, where they try their hands at tai chi and take part in a Ladyboys show. Last in the series.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.

10.20 The Graham Norton Show Graham is joined by the stars of The Greatest Showman, Hugh Jackman, Zendaya and Zac Efron, as well as Gary Oldman and Suranne Jones. With music by the Leading Ladies.

11.20 Nile Rodgers & Chic: Good Times 2017 The musician and his funk band perform live as the year draws to a close. Featuring footage of the traditional New Year's fireworks display, choreographed to fit a medley of music.

11.55 New Year's Eve Fireworks 2017

12.10 Nile Rodgers & Chic: Good Times 2018 12.50 Michael McIntyre: Happy & Glorious (R) 1.50 FILM: Old School (2003) ★★★ 3.20 Weather for the Week Ahead 3.25 BBC News

3.40 84 Charing Cross Road (1987) Romantic drama, starring Anne Bancroft and Anthony Hopkins. ★★★ 5.15 Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time (2010) Fantasy adventure, starring Jake Gyllenhaal. ★★★

7.00 Robot Wars Special 2017: The World Series Dara O Briain and Angela Scanlon present a special episode in which four champion robots from past series battle it out against a team of rivals from other countries.

8.00 Into the Woods (2014) Premiere. A wicked witch agrees to lift a curse on a young couple if they will help restore her once beautiful looks. Musical fantasy, starring Meryl Streep and Emily Blunt. ★★★

10.00 Match of the Day 2 Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, featuring Crystal Palace v Manchester City and West Bromwich Albion v Arsenal.

10.50 Live at the Apollo Henning Wehn hosts tonight's show, which features performances from Lucy Porter and Guz Khan.

11.20 Jools' Annual Hootenanny Jools Holland presents his 25th annual New Year party, featuring performances from Ed Sheeran, Mavis Staples, Beth Ditto, Ruby Turner, Jessie Ware and Soul II Soul.

1.20 Best of Glastonbury 2017 Jo Whiley and Mark Radcliffe introduce highlights from the festival at Worthy Farm in Somerset. (R) 3.25 Sign Zone: Countryfile John Craven, Anita Rani and Matt Baker present a special festive episode from the Castleton Christmas Tree Festival, and go behind the scenes at a carol concert in Peak Cavern. (R)

3.30 A Right Royal Quiz Fern Britton hosts a panel show about the royal family. 4.30 Victoria The queen and Prince Albert have very different expectations for a family Christmas and the arrival of guests at the palace causes further tension. Starring Jenna Coleman. (R)

6.25 ITV News Central; Weather.

6.35 6.50 ITV News and Weather Cannonball Splash Hits Andrew Flintoff presents highlights from the first series of the action-packed game show, in which contestants tackle a series of water-based, obstacle course challenges.

7.50 Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (2011) The young wizard and his friends face their final battle with the forces of the dark lord Voldemort. Conclusion of the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe. ★★★

10.15 The Real Full Monty Alexander Armstrong and Ashley Banjo lead a group of male celebrities as they recreate the famous striptease from The Full Monty to raise awareness of men's health issues. (R)

11.45 ITV News and Weather and New Year Bongs

12.10 FILM: Parenthood (1989) An anxious family man struggles to be a better parent to his three children than his own father was to him. Comedy drama, starring Steve Martin. ★★★ 2.15 Take Me Out A singing software engineer, a semi-pro footballer, a personal trainer and a world-class horse-rider seek the approval of Paddy McGuinness's 30 single women. (R) 3.20 Through the Keyhole Keith Lemon visits mystery celebrity homes and challenges this week's panel - Fearne Cotton, Will Mellor and Judge Rinder - to guess the identities of the famous owners. (R) 4.10 ITV Nightscreen

4.20 Channel 4 News Including sport and weather.

4.25 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast Ashley Jensen learns to make authentic Umbrian pasta. (R)

5.25 Britain's Wildest Weather 2017 Some of the UK's most unusual weather in the past year. (R)

6.25 ITV News and Weather Cannonball Splash Hits Andrew Flintoff presents highlights from the first series of the action-packed game show, in which contestants tackle a series of water-based, obstacle course challenges.

7.50 Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (2011) The young wizard and his friends face their final battle with the forces of the dark lord Voldemort. Conclusion of the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe. ★★★

8.00 The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Christmas Special Richard Ayoade guides Mollie King, Ellie Simmonds, Nicola Adams, Ollie Locke and Tom Davis through the time zones, as they tackle physical skill, mystery and mental challenges. (R)

9.00 Alan Carr's New Year Spectacular 2017 The presenter hosts his annual New Year's party, with guests including Big Narstie, Keith Lemon, Caroline Flack and Alex Brooker, and music from Stefflon Don and Pete Tong.

11.00 Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2017 Jimmy Carr hosts a comedy quiz looking back at the past 12 months, with panellists Richard Ayoade, Noel Fielding, David Mitchell, Big Narstie, Roisin Conaty and Katherine Ryan. (R)

1.00 Gogglebox 2017 Highlights from the most recent series. (R) 2.55 The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Special Andrea McLean, Spencer Matthews, Tom Allen, Stacey Solomon and Joe Swash compete. (R) 3.50 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) 4.40 Location, Location, Location (R) 5.35 Come Dine with Me (R)

3.55 5 News Update Round-up.

4.00 Groundhog Day (1993) Comedy, starring Bill Murray. ★★★

4.55 5 News Weekend The day's headlines.

5.00 The Lego Movie (2014) Premiere. Animated comedy, with the voice of Chris Pratt. ★★★

7.00 The Lego Story: Brick by Brick Documentary charting the history of the toy, looking at how the seemingly humble bricks have been developed and adapted over the decades into one of the world's most popular brands. (R)

8.00 World's Strongest Man 2017 Action from the fifth heat in Botswana, which featured Lithuania's Zyrunas Savickas, a four-time winner who was returning from an injury that kept him out of the 2016 event.

8.50 5 News Weekend Round-up of the day's headlines from around the world.

9.00 All New When TV Goes Horribly Wrong Richard Bacon narrates a compilation of disasters befalling TV presenters, featuring mishaps involving Phillip Schofield, Anne Diamond, Denis Tuohy, Ross King and Charlotte Crosby.

11.55 Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the 12th round of matches, including Bath v Wasps, Gloucester v Sale Sharks and Saracens v Worcester Warriors.

1.20 SuperCasino Live interactive gaming. 3.10 World's Strongest Man 2017 4.00 Cruising with Jane McDonald 4.50 House Doctor (R) 5.20 Wildlife SOS (R) 5.50 Chinese Food in Minutes (R)

CELEBRITY CHEFS 27

Cooking up memories

GINO LOVES A 10-COURSE ITALIAN FEAST, WHILE JOHN WHAITE TAKES CHARGE OF THE SPROUTS.

Reminiscing over Christmases past is a crucial part of the festive season, especially when it comes to making a decision over what you'll be dishing up this year.

So, we caught up with a few of our favourite chefs to discover their ultimate Christmas foodie memories...

1. According to Tim Anderson, you can grow to love mince pies

MasterChef winner Tim is American, so his first British Christmas was quite the experience: "First of all, so many desserts - trifle, the cake, the Christmas pudding. Then my mother-in-law makes Christmas cookies and rocky road. Mince pies; I didn't like them at first, I thought they were too sweet, but now I can't get enough of them. And then the roast dinner, which I think is the height of British cooking. Roast potatoes, my father-in-law taught me to make them and they're amazing. We just do that in America."

2. Rick Stein remembers a hot Aussie Christmas

"The first time I had an Australian Christmas, which was salad and prawns outdoor by the pool - and this was in the early-Eighties; my fond memories are always of having turkey or goose - but having a genuine Australian Christmas, which a lot of Aussies don't have, they still have roast turkey, was quite special," says the seafood aficionado.

3. Barbecuing in the snow is fine by Claire Thompson

The '5 O'clock Apron' blogger lived in Africa until she was eight, so grew up having hot Christmases by the pool, as did her Kiwi husband Matt. But some of her favourite Christmases have been since she moved to England and started spending them at her mum's house in Shropshire, although they still rarely have turkey: "We have a brilliant photo of Matt standing in gum boots in about 3ft of snow with a head-torch on, barbecuing steaks."

4. The trick is to have an all-day breakfast, says Kirstie Allsopp

To avoid rushing about with the turkey, while the kids open their presents first thing, the presenter and Kirstie's Real Kitchen author has restructured Christmas day: "I like to do the supper at six o'clock, after the Queen's speech, and basically have an all-day, rolling breakfast while everyone opens their presents. So, pancakes, scrambled eggs and maybe a bit of salmon - easy things. You can keep everyone fed and occupied - maybe have a couple of glasses of prosecco - and then have a big early supper."

5. In John Whaite's house, the sprouts are always waterlogged

"It's like a scene from Piranha - the good films, not the new ones with Kelly Brook - with hands coming from every direction trying to grab the crispiest potatoes," says the former Bake Off champion of his traditional Christmas lunches at home. "Poor mum always waterlogs the Brussels sprouts, no matter how hard I try to say, 'Please, just fry them'. So I said, 'This year, I don't care what's happening, I will kidnap you if I have to, I'm taking your freedom away from you and I'm making my sticky Lebanese sprouts'. I don't boil anything these days, except pasta!"

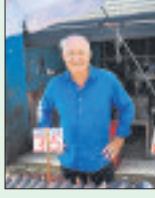
6. For Gino D'Acampo, Italian Christmas lunch is a serious business

"Here, it's all about having a starter and then having this huge plate, where the turkey goes on top and the Yorkshire pudding and the potatoes, then it's pretty much over. In Italy it's different," explains Gino D'Acampo, whose new book, Gino's Italian Coastal Escape, was recently released.

"We do between 10 and 15 different courses. We have fish, because we don't have turkey. One of the dishes we do is sea bass cooked in a salt crust. We do a lot of antipasti, cured hams and cheeses. There is a lot for everybody, and you put everything in the middle of the table and spend four or five hours eating."

7. Kate Young's granny makes the most decadent duvet beef

Australian-born food writer Kate Young remembers the year her granny visited the UK from Brisbane: "My granny made duvet beef for Christmas dinner. It's an enormous beef rump that she roasts for 45 minutes in a really hot oven, and then pulls it out and wraps up straightaway in foil, newspaper and then in a massive duvet, and then puts it in a box and leaves it for seven hours. It gradually cooks and it's the best rare roast beef you've ever had," she says.



Rick Stein



Kirsty Allsopp

Late View

11.20 Nile Rodgers & Chic: Good Times 2017 The musician and his funk band perform live as the year draws to a close. Featuring footage of the traditional New Year's fireworks display, choreographed to fit a medley of music.

11.55 New Year's Eve Fireworks 2017

12.10 Nile Rodgers & Chic: Good Times 2018 12.50 Michael McIntyre: Happy & Glorious (R) 1.50 FILM: Old School (2003) ★★★ 3.20 Weather for the Week Ahead 3.25 BBC News

A cracker or a turkey?

DOES YOUR BEHAVIOUR MEAN YOU'RE CRACKING COMPANY AT CHRISTMAS PARTIES?

Or does everyone think you're a right turkey? Take our quiz to find out...

The office Christmas party is just getting underway, and you are...

a) Standing in the corner, moaning how bad the buffet is - but still find you're the last person to leave at the end of the night

b) Insisting on re-doing all the girls' make-up, they don't look nearly festive enough

c) Already on the dance floor and planning who to snog under the mistletoe

d) Too busy organising it to even think about having fun

When the clock strikes midnight on December 31, you're most likely to be...

a) At an expensive ticket-only party - grumbling about the cost

b) Telling everyone to sing Auld Lang Syne

c) Asleep - you got too excited, too early, and fell asleep at 10pm

d) Handing out drinks to everyone

What's your favourite part of the Christmas meal?

a) The potatoes - you can't go wrong with a spud

b) The turkey of course, but if it's dry it's awful

c) Christmas pud! It's so exciting when you're all looking for the hidden coin

d) The sprouts - well someone's got to love them...

You're asked to babysit your nieces on 23 December. You...

a) Say no - they'll be too excited and annoying

b) Agree, and while you're there, you prepare all your sister's Christmas dinner for her - she didn't ask you to, but she'll appreciate it

c) Jump at the chance to spend the evening writing letters to Santa

d) Say yes, then help them write Christmas cards for their mum and dad

You're going to watch a Christmas film. You choose...

a) The Grinch - it's great until it gets all soppy

b) Miracle On 34th Street - it's all about proving people wrong

c) Home Alone - it's so funny

d) It's A Wonderful Life - an oldie but a goodie

Your favourite part of a trifle is the...

a) Sponge at the bottom - shame you've got to eat the rest to get to it

b) Cream on the top - it's all about appearances

c) Jelly - it reminds you of jelly and ice cream at birthday parties

d) Sherry - you need it after rushing around on your feet all day!

A few days before Christmas, you're up extra early because...

a) You're getting the last-minute shopping out of the way before all the horrible crowds

b) You need to get presents for your partner's family, because you didn't like his choices

c) You're too over-excited to sleep any longer

d) You've offered to pick up the turkey from the supermarket for your in-laws

You're very festive night out will involve going...

a) To the same pub you always go to at this time of year - it's rubbish, but it's a tradition

b) To the pantomime. You like the bit where you say 'he's behind you'

c) Carol singing - you've put together a group and everyone will love it

d) To the kids' school disco to help chaperone

How did you score?

Mostly As: Unhappy uncle

You're a complete misery guts and moan about everything, from the terrible cracker presents.

Mostly Bs: Good gracious, Gran!

You always know best and you're not afraid to tell others when things aren't up to your high standard.

Mostly Cs: Little kid

There is over-excited... and then there's you! You are massively enthusiastic about all things Christmas.

Mostly Ds: Marvelous mum

Everyone looks forward to you coming round - you're always happy to help.

New Year's Day

BBC 1



Angelina Jolie stars, Maleficent, on at 5.00pm

6.00 Breakfast News, entertainment and weather reports. 9.00 FILM: Cars 2 (2011) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Owen Wilson. ★★★ 10.40 How to Train Your Dragon: Legend of the Boneknapper Dragon (R) 10.55 FILM: Bedtime Stories (2008) ★★★ 12.25 The Highway Rat Animated comedy, with the voice of David Tennant. (R) 12.55 The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message With the Most Rev Justin Welby. 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.15 A Christmas Carol Goes Wrong Anarchic festive comedy, created by the Mischief Theatre Company. (R) 2.05 FILM: Shrek Forever After (2010) Animated comedy, with the voice of Mike Myers. ★★★

BBC 2



Biblical epic, starring Russell Crowe, Noah, on at 10.00pm

6.25 Sign Zone: Stick Man (R) 6.55 FILM: Frankenweenie (2012) Animated fantasy, with the voice of Charlie Tahan. (b/w) ★★★ 8.15 The Big Family Cooking Showdown Zoe Ball and Nadiya Hussain present the last semi-final. (R) 9.15 The Big Family Cooking Showdown The three most successful families compete in the final. Last in the series. (R) 10.15 New Year's Day Concert Live from Vienna 2018 The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra performs polkas, marches and waltzes. 12.45 White Falcon, White Wolf: Natural World The lives of gyrfalcons and wolves in the Arctic. (R) 13.5 FILM: Dances with Wolves (1990) Oscar-winning Western, starring Kevin Costner. ★★★

ITV



Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas, on at 5.45pm

6.00 CITV: Dino Dana. (R) 6.10 Dino Dana (R) 6.25 Super 4. (R) 6.40 Super 4 (R) 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story (R) 7.00 A Grizzly New Year's Tale: The Crystal Eye (R) 7.25 Horrid Henry (R) 7.40 Horrid Henry (R) 7.55 Horrid Henry (R) 8.10 Horrid Henry (R) 8.25 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.40 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.55 Scrambled! (R) 9.25 Cannonball Splash Hits (R) 10.25 You've Been Framed! (R) 10.55 50 Greatest Harry Potter Moments (R) 12.45 ITV News and Weather 1.00 ITV Racing: Live from Cheltenham Coverage of today's race meetings at Cheltenham and Musselburgh.

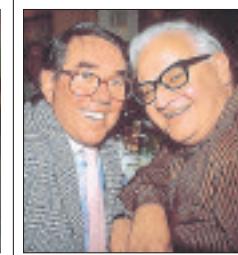
CH4



First Dates: Celebrity Special for SU2C, on at 11.15pm

6.05 Jamie's Cracking Christmas Jamie Oliver cooks beef Wellington. (R) 6.15 FILM: Flash Gordon (1980) Sci-fi comic-strip adventure, starring Sam J Jones. ★★★ 8.15 FILM: Thunderbirds (2004) Sci-fi adventure, starring Bill Paxton. ★★ 10.05 The Simpsons Bart and Milhouse take over the comic-book shop. (R) 10.35 The Simpsons With the voices of Venus and Serena Williams. (R) 11.05 The Simpsons (R) 11.35 FILM: The Cat in the Hat (2003) Comedy fantasy, starring Mike Myers. ★★ 1.10 FILM: Hugo (2011) An orphan living in the walls of a railway station in 1930s Paris uncovers a lonely shopkeeper's mysterious past. Family adventure, starring Asa Butterfield. ★★★

CH5



The Two Ronnies: In Their Own Words, on at 8.00pm

6.00 Milkshake! 7.45 Thomas & Friends: Journey Beyond Sodor Feature-length special, narrated by Mark Moraghan. 9.15 FILM: On the Town (1949) Musical following the romantic misadventures of three sailors looking for love while enjoying a day's shore leave in New York. Starring Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra and Jules Munshin. ★★★ 11.25 FILM: Oliver! (1968) Musical version of the Dickens tale about an orphan who falls into the hands of petty crook Fagin and his gang of young pickpockets. Starring Ron Moody, Mark Lester and Oliver Reed. ★★★ 2.10 FILM: Mrs Caldicott's Cabbage War (2002) Comedy drama, starring Pauline Collins, Peter Capaldi and John Alderton. ★★

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

3.30 Blue Planet II: Oceans of Wonder Highlights from David Attenborough's recent series.

5.00 Maleficent (2014) Premiere. Fantasy adventure, starring Angelina Jolie. ★★★

6.30 BBC News; Weather. 6.45 Midlands Today; Weather

6.55 BBC's Great Grandpa's Great Escape A boy tries to rescue his grandfather from a care home run by an evil matron. Adaptation of David Walliams' children's book, with Tom Courtenay, Kit Connor and Jennifer Saunders.

8.00 EastEnders The day has arrived for Aidan's gang to pull off their job, but when Shirley realises Mick is mixed up in something bad, she takes steps to prevent him getting involved any further.

9.00 McMafia New series. The English-raised son of a Russian mafia boss tries to escape the ties of organised crime.

10.00 Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special Winnie and Agnes join Father Damien's neighbourhood patrol, but it quickly becomes clear they are not cut out for crimebusting. Mrs Brown also tries to sort out Cathy's love life.

10.30 BBC News; Weather. 10.50 Midlands Today; Weather

11.00 Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2008) The globe-trotting archaeologist races against Soviet agents to find a mysterious artefact of untold power. Action adventure sequel, starring Harrison Ford. ★★★

12.55 The Graham Norton Show (R) 1.55 Weather for the Week Ahead 2.00 BBC News

4.25 Sign Zone: The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message (R)

4.30 Final Score

5.30 The Perfect Morecambe & Wise (R)

6.00 Eric & Ernie's Home Movies (R)

7.00 Reindeer Family & Me Gordon Buchanan goes to live with a family from the nomadic Sami culture in Finnish Lapland, and undertakes a journey across the frozen wilderness with the help of a reindeer. (R)

8.00 Only Connect Round two losers Snake Charmers and the Inquisitors return for one final chance to stay in the competition. Victoria Coren Mitchell asks the questions.

8.30 Christmas University Challenge 2017 Teams made up of distinguished graduates of Queen Mary University of London and Cardiff University compete to secure a place in the semi-finals. Jeremy Paxman hosts.

9.00 Sue Perkins and the Chimp Sanctuary The comedian travels to America to meet a group of female chimpanzees previously used in medical research as they arrive at Chimp Haven, the US national sanctuary for the primates.

10.00 Noah (2014) Premiere. A man is chosen by God to build an ark capable of housing pairs of every living creature when the world is flooded. Biblical epic, starring Russell Crowe and Ray Winstone. ★★★

10.30 ITV News and Weather

11.05 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness present their half-hour remake of Rocky, starring Anna Friel, Marvin Humes and Andi Peters. (R)

12.00 The Price Is Right Alan Carr invites five lucky members of the studio audience to "Come on Down" for a special edition of the world's longest-running TV game show. (R) 1.15 FILM: Speed 2: Cruise Control (1997) A couple on a cruise liner in the Bahamas have to stop the vessel from colliding with an oil tanker. Action thriller sequel, with Sandra Bullock, Jason Patric and Willem Dafoe. ★★★ 2.20 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA A failing restaurant in California. (R) 4.10 Location, Location, Location A family home in the Essex countryside on a £1million budget. (R) 5.05 Come Dine with Me Danny Bond throws the second dinner party in Norwich. (R)

12.30 Jackpot247 3.00 The Jeremy Kyle Show (R) 3.55 ITV Nightscreen 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show (R)

3.30 Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005) Children's fantasy, starring Johnny Depp. ★★★

5.45 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas (R)

6.40 ITV News and Weather

7.00 Emmerdale Debbie invites Tom to join her family's protest against the golf course developers. However, he becomes evasive when questioned about his new job, raising her suspicions.

7.30 Coronation Street Chesney makes a scene during his and Sinead's hen and stag parties, believing his filmed run-in with Daniel is about to be screened, and Steve offers to help Michelle and Robert.

8.00 Spectre (2015) Premiere. James Bond goes in search of the elusive mastermind behind a secret criminal network with links to his own past. Spy thriller, starring Daniel Craig and Christoph Waltz. ★★★

8.00 Pitch Perfect 2 (2015) Premiere. The Barden Bellas try to recover from a disastrous performance by winning the World Championships of A Cappella. Comedy sequel, starring Anna Kendrick and Rebel Wilson. ★★★

11.15 First Dates: Celebrity Special for SU2C

An edition in aid of Stand Up to Cancer in which singer Sinitta, MP Michael Fabricant, DJ Roman Kemp and ex-newsreader Jan Leeming go on blind dates with members of the public. (R)

12.20 The Price Is Right Alan Carr invites five lucky members of the studio audience to "Come on Down" for a special edition of the world's longest-running TV game show. (R) 1.15 FILM: Speed 2: Cruise Control (1997) A couple on a cruise liner in the Bahamas have to stop the vessel from colliding with an oil tanker. Action thriller sequel, with Sandra Bullock, Jason Patric and Willem Dafoe. ★★★ 2.20 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA A failing restaurant in California. (R) 4.10 Location, Location, Location A family home in the Essex countryside on a £1million budget. (R) 5.05 Come Dine with Me Danny Bond throws the second dinner party in Norwich. (R)

1.00 SuperCasino Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.10 World's Strongest Man 2017 Action from the Grand Final in Botswana, with the 10 best athletes from the heats battling it out in events such as the Tyre Flip, Viking Press and Atlas Stones. Last in the series.

8.00 The Two Ronnies: In Their Own Words

A celebration of the lives and careers of comedy duo Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett, featuring performances, chat show appearances and rare and long-forgotten archive material.

10.00 Britain's Greatest Ever Double Acts

A countdown of the nation's favourite duos from the worlds of TV, film, music, animation and sport, including the Two Ronnies, Morecambe & Wise and Ant and Dec. (R)

11.50 Football on 5: The Championship

Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Leeds United v Nottingham Forest and Bolton Wanderers v Hull City.

1.00 SuperCasino

Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel

spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.10 World's Strongest Man 2017 Action from the fifth heat in Botswana, which featured Lithuania's Zydrunas Savickas, a four-time winner who was returning from an injury that kept him out of the 2016 event. (R)

4.00 Cruising with Jane McDonald

The presenter heads to Alaska, America's largest state. (R)

4.45 Access Showbiz news and gossip.

4.55 House Doctor

Ann Maurice visits Southampton's marina development Ocean Village. (R)

5.20 Wildlife SOS (R)

The Ticket

@TheTicket_Star



STAR WARS EPISODE VIII: THE LAST JEDI – INSIDE



Richard Powell poses with Paul Naylor



Jedi Knights Joseph Masefield and Grant Brown



SPOILER FREE

A bold and beautiful stroke of storytelling to divide fans

It's the most wonderful time of the year – according to the classic festive hit by Andy Williams. Yes, Andy it is, but not because it's nearly Christmas.

When Disney bought Lucasfilm in a multi-million dollar deal just over five years ago, the House of Mouse didn't rest on its laurels. Since that initial announcement in 2012 we have already been treated to three films in the festive period.

More by design than decision, *The Force Awakens* (TFA) was moved from a planned release in May 2015 to the December of that year following delays in filming – primarily because of Harrison Ford's on-set accident.

TFA was a safe return to the silver screen for the franchise, regurgitating much of what had gone before. In many ways it was brave to copy so many themes. Even tongue-in-cheek jokes about Starkiller Base being nothing more than another Death Star acknowledged its cut-and-paste nature.

This time last year, *Rogue One* proved that a Star Wars story utilising predominantly a fresh set of doomed characters could both satisfy and diversify away from the



episodic structure.

I've now seen Episode 8. *The Last Jedi* (TLJ) is visually amazing, but it's not without flaws. In a word, it's mystical. A fantasy more so than previous episodes.

What American director Rian Johnson has achieved is an engaging, thrilling rollercoaster ride of emotions that will leave audiences exhausted and quite possibly flabbergasted.

Returning to the role of Luke Skywalker, Mark Hamill was understandably nervous about reprising the character that both made and hindered his acting career. Now in his 60s, his biggest worry was ruining the legacy of his previous involvement in the saga. He needn't have worried.

Mark's portrayal of a now aged Jedi is nothing short of mesmerising, and there has even been talk of Oscars. High praise indeed. Let's just say his performance is touching and nostalgic in what is a refreshingly unique entry in the saga.

Carrie Fisher is surprisingly good in this movie. I wasn't too impressed with General Leia in TFA, but in TLJ she is most impressive and another hot favourite for posthumous recognition come 2018's awards season.

Previous newcomers to the saga, John Boyega, Oscar Isaac and Daisy Ridley are now well established members of the Star Wars family. Indeed, the way in which Daisy carried TFA was no mean feat. If you thought she was good in that, you ain't seen nothing yet.

New characters are abundant, but Resistance maintenance worker Rose Tico – played by Kelly Marie

Tran – is a revelation. She steals the majority of the scenes she appears in.

I caught up with a few fellow Star Wars fans at the end of the midnight screenings in both Telford – and via social media, in Birmingham – which saw the launch of Episode 8 to the general public on Thursday.

I met two young Jedis from the planet Cannock. Joseph Masefield and Grant Brown came dressed for the occasion, but left Cineworld in Telford more than a little perplexed. "I don't know what to think at this stage," said Joseph. "I need to go away and think about what I have just seen."

SURPRISES

Richard Powell from Sedgley was at the Telford screening too. He had already seen the film at Tuesday's European Premiere at The Royal Albert Hall. Richard, who is part of The Rebel Legion, a fundraising group who dress as Star Wars characters for charity events, was more casually dressed for the screening. "It's a great film, full of surprises," he said.

Chris Cooke and Jonathan Hipkiss, both from Halesowen, attended the midnight showing at Cineworld on Birmingham's Broad Street. "The film starts

great, but it definitely did not go the way I thought it would," said Chris.

"It's a bold and beautiful stroke of storytelling that will divide fan opinion," said Jonathan.

As for me? Well, I am a huge Star Wars fan, but much like my good friend Mark Newbold from Burntwood, founder of Star Wars fansite *Fantha Tracks*, I have my reservations.

Mark was at a special press screening on Monday. At the time he said:

"I need to see it again. Very impressive in places, less so in others. Mind whirling with thoughts."

I think Mark sums things up well. There is so much going on that the film not only warrants multiple viewings, it demands it.

Yes, it has taken the saga in a bold direction, but for me – and countless fans – 1980's *The Empire Strikes Back* remains the benchmark.

Paul Naylor
I Shropshire born Paul Naylor is events correspondent and regular contributor to Star Wars fansite *Fantha Tracks*. For the latest Star Wars news visit fanthatracks.com

Mark's portrayal of a now aged Jedi is mesmerising



Stars to shine at anniversary celebrations

Opera superstar Russell Watson is to stage a concert in Telford as part of the town and Oakengates Theatre's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The tenor will perform on August 4.

Other stars to take part in next year's celebrations include comedians Dara O'Brien and Al Murray, Westlife's Brian McFadden and Boyzone's Keith Duffy.

There will also be a concert from Britain's Got Talent winners Collabro.

To mark the theatre's landmark birthday, it is moving to the Town Park Arena between August 4 and 19 to showcase an extravaganza of entertainment. Councillor Shaun Davies, leader of Telford & Wrekin Council,

said: "I am delighted that we are able to announce such a varied range of acts for The Place In The Park. This will be a fabulous way of celebrating both Telford's and the theatre's 50th birthdays and there is something for everyone during the course of the run of events. "We are putting the acts on sale in early December as tickets will make great Christmas presents for loved ones."

Other performances will take place including Scheherazade and 1001 Nights, set to take place on August 5.

On August 6 there will be a Sounds of the 60s show, with a Supersonic 70s concert taking place on August 7. Dara O'Brien is expected to fill the park

when he performs on August 8. He will be followed by an 80s Mania show on August 9. Boyzlife will perform on August 10. Al Murray's show will be on August 10.

Collabro round out the announced shows, and will perform on August 16. More shows for the "extravaganza of entertainment" are set to be announced in the coming months.

The concerts will be part of a year of new or enhanced events to mark the anniversary. Other events will include a Festival of Telford Giants, a specially commissioned pantomime about the town and a Japanese influenced Sakura Festival.



Pantomime is a huge hit with younger audience

THEATRE Severn's latest pantomime offering has proved a huge hit with youngsters. Hundreds of schoolchildren have taken a trip to the Shrewsbury theatre to enjoy this year's Christmas pantomime.

Among the students were children from Whittington Primary School near Oswestry who enjoyed Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Thousands of families will head to Shrewsbury over the festive period to catch Victoria McCabe, as Snow White, on its mammoth run, stretching through to January 5. Spurred on by pantomime favourite Brad Fitt, who this year donned a frock to play the dame, Nurse Nellie, the pupils screamed, danced and sang their way through the show.

The biggest cheer of the performance came when the seven dwarfs, Cheeky, Brian, Sarge, Brummie, Sniffly, Rocker and Loopy marched on stage and got the pupils dancing. Marley Valentine from Whittington Primary said going to the pantomime, which is an annual event for the school, was his favourite day of the year. He added: "I love coming to see the pantomime because it's fun. I liked the bad ghosts this time because they were scary."

The show has been written by Telford born Paul Hendy and is produced by Evolution, the same team behind last year's pantomime, Cinderella. Radio Shropshire's Eric Smith returns again this year as Herman the Henchman, Joanne Heywood is playing the Wicked Queen Ivannah, Matt Dallen plays Muffles and Oliver Watton is making his Theatre Severn debut as the Prince. The pantomime is the theatre's biggest event of the year, selling thousands of tickets and plans are already underway for the 2018 pantomime, Mother Goose.

This year's cast stop for a photo-shoot



* THE Christmas lunch for the members of the Oswestry group of the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship was held at the Wynnstar Hotel on December. This was attended by around 30 members and guests who all enjoyed an excellent meal. The event was organised by Jan Stokes, and members have thanked her for her hard work. The next meeting, to be held on Tuesday, January 2, is the annual general meeting followed as usual by a lunch at the Wynnstar. This meeting will start at the usual time of 10.30am after coffee. Members are reminded that Ruth Haile will be standing down as chairman at this meeting, and anyone interested in replacing her is asked to come forward. The fellowship is

NOTICE BOARD

a local group for government and other pensioners who are welcome to attend the meetings, which are usually held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Wynnstar Hotel, Oswestry, starting at 10.30am after coffee. There is an annual subscription for those pensioners who are not members of the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship which is £10. Further details can be obtained from chairman Ruth Haile on 01691 650993.

* A GAME that sees six people locked in a room and given an hour to escape has been sweeping the nation – and

is now being launched in Mid Wales. The 'Breakout' game is popping up all over the UK, with people having an hour to work out a series of puzzles to escape. Currently there is one in Telford and Chester. And now Broneirion in Llandinam, near Newtown, has converted its cellar into two escape rooms themed 'Freaky Fairground' and 'Night at the Museum'. Everyone taking part, including adults and children, are charged £15 and there is a cafe on hand afterwards for debriefing and refreshments. Broneirion is taking bookings from January 8 and is expecting a lot of interest in the new attraction. All the money raised will go towards the £1 million a year needed to support the work of Girlguiding Cymru

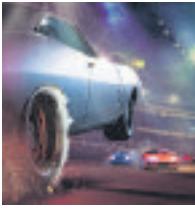
and give women and girls a voice across Wales. The escape rooms, the themes of which will change every six months, were the brainchild of Lesley Matthews, chief commissioner for Girlguiding Cymru. Lorna Morris, Broneirion's marketing officer, carried out market research by visiting three different escape rooms, including the nearest at Telford and is convinced the concept will take off in Mid Wales. She said: "These rooms are quite addictive because you want to find a way to escape quicker each time. They are great fun for families, for groups of friends or for corporate team building exercises."

"You have your photograph taken when you manage to escape."

Coming soon...

Fast and Furious action on way

Adrenaline fans from Oswestry and Welshpool can have their needs fulfilled when Fast & Furious Live heads to Birmingham as part of the first leg of a global arena tour.



The action and excitement from one of the most popular and enduring film series of all-time will come to life in this ground-breaking live-arena tour.

The tour comes to Arena Birmingham on April 20-22.

Creative director and executive producer, Fast & Furious Live, Rowland French said: "It's been years in the making, and we are beyond excited to finally show fellow fans what we have been creating in order to bring Fast & Furious Live to the global stage. With this mix of extraordinary stunts, special effects, cutting-edge 3D-projection mapping – as well as drivers pushing their own limits – every performance will create an unforgettable experience for the live audience. Twenty-three cities across 14 countries is just the beginning for Fast & Furious Live."

The adrenaline-fueled, two-hour show is set to be the most spectacular live arena production ever produced, featuring precision performance driving and newly created physics-defying stunts. Using favourite cars and locations that criss-cross the globe along with key scenes from the film series – created via state-of-the-art 3D projection mapping – fans will be transported straight into this immersive extension of the Fast & Furious movies.

Shania is still the one

Country music fans from Oswestry and Welshpool will have a chance to see one of the genre's greatest stars in concert soon.



Multiplatinum, multi-award winning Shania Twain has announced six UK & Ireland arena dates for autumn 2018 – the first time Shania has toured here in 13 years.

The star said: "It's time to get back out there and give the music a chance to live a life."

She will embark on her first UK & Eire tour since 2004's Huge Up! Tour.

The star will take the stage at Arena Birmingham on September 24.

Shania is a five-time Grammy Award-winner and the reigning Queen of Country Pop. With 90 million albums sold worldwide, Shania remains the top-selling female country artist of all time. Shania's albums include her platinum-selling 1993 debut, Shania Twain; the Grammy Award-winning, double diamond-selling 1995 release, The Woman in Me; Come On Over, the best-selling studio album in SoundScan history by a female artist in any genre and the best-selling country album of all time with over 40 million units sold worldwide; and Up!, Shania's third consecutive Diamond-selling album release.

Recognising her indelible impact and achievements in music, Shania is the first and only female artist to receive CMT's Artist of a Lifetime Award. She was also honoured with the Icon Award at Billboard's Women in Music ceremony.

The Script to entertain fans

Irish three-piece The Script have announced their 2018 UK & Ireland Arena tour.

The group will play 13 dates including a night at Birmingham's Genting Arena on February 15.



Their latest album Freedom Child sees the band presenting a collection of urgent, timely, future-facing anthems that speak of both real-life events and real-time sonic adventure.

The album was recorded between London and Los Angeles and for the first time, the band chose to work with some outside writers and producers including Toby Gad and Nasri Atweh. The follow up to 2014's No Sound Without Silence can be purchased/ streamed from <http://smarturl.it/FreedomChild>.

The Script are one of the world's most successful bands and have sold over 29 million records. They have scored multi-platinum albums, all of which were number one in the UK. The Script have also picked up a huge following in the USA where they have platinum selling singles under their belt.

December 23


Casualty
8.05pm

Chemotherapy takes its toll on Connie as she tries to stoically battle through a gruelling pre-Christmas shift, and a lonely Sally Hodge returns to the ED.


Feud: Bette and Joan
9pm

The dispute between Baby Jane's leading ladies takes a turn for the physical, and Bette's relationship with her daughter becomes strained as she bonds with a new cast member.


Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway Presents - The Missing Crown Jewels
7.30pm

A chance to revisit the scripted comedy caper.


Kirstie's Handmade Christmas
4pm

Kirstie Allsopp features craft and recipe ideas, including diorama baubles, a handmade fairy of dazzling detail and a recipe for salmon. Plus, hand-printed wrapping paper.


Cruising with Jane McDonald Christmas Special
9pm

A seasonal edition finds the presenter on board the SS Antoinette travelling up the Rhine. She also visits some of the most dazzling Christmas markets.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast.
9.30 **Saturday Kitchen.** Former EastEnders actress Nina Wadia (Zainab Masood) joins guest host Andi Oliver to sample treats cooked up by Vivek Singh and Rick Stein in the studio kitchen.
11.00 **Mary Berry's Christmas Party.** Festive recipes, with Alex Jones, Darcey Bussell, Fearne Cotton, Adil Ray and Mylene Klass. (R)
12.00 **Football Focus.** Dan Walker and guests review the week's headlines.
1.00 **BBC News; Weather.**
1.15 **Film: Cool Runnings (1993).** Fact-based comedy about four Jamaicans who became the first bobsleigh team to compete for their country at the 1988 Winter Olympics. Starring John Candy, Leon and Doug E Doug.
2.50 **Film: Frozen (2013).** Disney animated fantasy adventure, with the voice of Kristen Bell.
4.20 **Final Score.** A round-up of this afternoon's football results.
5.30 **Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme Christmas Special.** Two amateur poets compete in a festive edition of the lyrical game show.
6.00 **BBC News.**
6.10 **Midlands Today; Weather.**
6.15 **Pointless Celebrities Christmas Special.** Jona Lewie, Mike Batt, Jimmy Osmond, Ben Haenow, Gareth Malone, Samantha Stevenson, and Justin and Dan Hawkins compete in a Christmas hit-maker edition of the unorthodox quiz show.
7.10 **Even Better Than the Real Thing - Christmas Special.** Paddy McGuinness hosts a festive edition of his tribute act showcase, pitting five of the world's greatest professional cover artists against each other.
8.05 **Casualty.** Chemotherapy takes its toll on Connie as she tries to stoically battle through a gruelling pre-Christmas shift, and a lonely Sally Hodge returns to the ED.
8.55 **Miranda.** The very last episode sees the shopkeeper making one final attempt to accept herself and find contentment. Starring Miranda Hart, Patricia Hodge and Tom Ellis. Last in the series. (R)
9.30 **Our Friend Victoria at Christmas.** An extended edition of the comedy retrospective, in which Anne Reid revisits Victoria Wood's archive material to showcase her unique approach to all things festive.
10.10 **BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.**
10.30 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Everton v Chelsea at Goodison Park, and Leicester City v Manchester United at King Power Stadium.
12.10 **The NFL Show.** Mark Chapman is joined by former players Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell to look at the major stories shaping the NFL world, and preview the week 16 fixtures.
12.40 **Film: Disconnect (2012).** The complex lives of several strangers are made far more problematic by the technology they use to communicate. Ensemble drama, starring Jason Bateman.
2.30 **Weather for the Week Ahead.**
2.35 **BBC News.**

BBC2

6.15 **Island Parish Shetland.** Unst welcomes some unlikely visitors. (R)
6.45 **Film: The Bishop's Wife (1947).** Fantasy, starring Cary Grant.
8.30 **The Big Family Cooking Showdown.** The Karims from west London go up against the Dawes family from Hampshire. (R)
9.30 **Film: The Muppets (2011).** Comedy, starring Jason Segel.
11.10 **Nature's Wildest Weapons: Horns, Tusks and Antlers: Natural World.** How animals can use their bodies as weapons. (R)
12.10 **Mary Berry's Absolute Christmas Favourites.** Part one of two. The Great British Bake Off judge demonstrates recipes for the festive season. (R)
12.40 **Nigella's Christmas Table.** Nigella offers her tips for relaxed entertaining during the festive season. (R)
1.40 **The Millionaire's Gift Guide.** Documentary about event planners and suppliers of luxury goods. (R)
2.40 **Talking Pictures: Bette & Joan.** A dual profile of feuding Hollywood superstars Bette Davis and Joan Crawford.
3.10 **Film: Mildred Pierce (1945).** Melodrama, starring Joan Crawford.
5.00 **Hotel Armadillo: Natural World.** The giant armadillo. (R)
6.00 **Film: Bill (2015).** Premiere. William Shakespeare leaves his family to pursue his dreams, but gets caught up in a plot to blow up the queen. Historical comedy, with Mathew Baynton and Helen McCrory.
7.30 **Sir Lenny Henry - A Life on Screen.** A celebration of the career of the actor and comedian, delving into the archives to showcase work from more than 40 years in showbusiness. (R)
8.30 **Dad's Army.** Pompous Captain Mainwaring proves he is a softie at heart by organising a Christmas treat for the struggling senior citizens of Walmington-on-Sea. (R)
9.00 **Feud: Bette and Joan.** The dispute between Baby Jane's leading ladies takes a turn for the physical, and Bette's relationship with her daughter becomes strained as she bonds with a new cast member.
9.50 **Feud: Bette and Joan.** Bad word-of-mouth plagues Baby Jane on the eve of its release, forcing Bette and Joan to brace for failure. Biographical drama, starring Susan Sarandon and Jessica Lange.
10.35 **Film: What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? (1962).** An embittered former child star keeps her wheelchair-bound sister a prisoner in their home, carrying out a campaign of sadistic abuse. Drama, starring Bette Davis and Joan Crawford.
12.45 **Absolutely Fashion: Inside British Vogue.** Two-part documentary going behind the scenes of the fashion magazine as it celebrates its centenary, beginning with plans to change the front covers to appeal to a younger audience. (R)
1.45 **Sign Zone: Mary Berry's Christmas Party.** Festive recipes, with Alex Jones, Darcey Bussell, Fearne Cotton, Adil Ray and Mylene Klass. (R)
2.45 **This Is BBC2.** Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC2.

ITV

6.00 **CITV: Sooty 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street 6.20 Bottom Knocker Street.**
6.35 **Dino Dana 6.45 Super 4 7.00** Mission Employable 7.05 Om Nom Stories 7.10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors 7.30 The Tom and Jerry Show 7.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series 8.00 Mr Bean: The Animated Series 8.10 Horrid Henry 8.25 The Aquabats! Super Show! 8.55 Scrambled! ITV News.
9.25 **Saturday Morning with James Martin at Christmas.** James invites Galton Blackiston and Lisa Allen to join him for a festive edition of the show, in which he prepares Christmas turkey, lobster pasta and clementine and almond cake.
11.25 **Gino's Italian Coastal Escape.** The final destination of Gino's coastal journey takes him to the Aeolian Islands. Last in the series. (R)
11.55 **Countrywise.** Paul Heiney visits the Gower Peninsula. (R)
12.25 **ITV News and Weather; Weather.**
12.35 **Tipping Point.** Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R)
1.35 **Film: Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (2001).** An orphaned boy with magical powers enrolls at a special school for young wizards. First in the fantasy adventure series, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Alan Rickman and Richard Harris.
4.30 **Film: Despicable Me (2010).** An evil genius adopts three orphans to aid his latest plot, but fatherhood brings out his long-buried caring side. Animated comedy, with the voices of Steve Carell and Jason Segel.
6.30 **ITV News Central; Weather.**
6.40 **ITV News and Weather.**
7.00 **New You've Been Framed! Unwrapped.** Harry Hill makes the holiday season merry with festive-themed clips, including an unexpectedly destructive snowball colliding with a patio door.
7.30 **Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway Presents - The Missing Crown Jewels.** The duo's comedy crime sketch show, stitched together into a 30-minute standalone episode, sees Ant and Dec working to foil a plot to overthrow the Queen.
8.00 **Film: The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013).** Dwarf king Thorin descends into madness as his homeland stands on the brink of war. Conclusion of the fantasy adventure trilogy, with Martin Freeman and Richard Armitage.
10.35 **ITV News and Weather.**
10.55 **Miranda: Morecambe & Wise and Me.** Miranda Hart presents a countdown of the duo's 20 greatest moments. With contributions from David Walliams, Glenda Jackson, Paddy McGuinness, Angela Rippon and Andre Previn. (R)
12.40 **Jackpot247.** Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas.
3.00 **The Hungry Sailors.** Dick and James Strawbridge visit the Cornish fishing port of Newlyn, where they try their hand at shearing sheep and sort sardines to create stargazy pie. (R)
3.50 **ITV Nightscreen.**

Channel 4

6.15 **Frasier.** Dr Mary steals the limelight from Frasier. (R)
6.40 **Olive, the Other Reindeer.** Animation, with the voice of Drew Barrymore. (R)
7.30 **Film: The Rugrats Movie (1999).** Animated comedy, with the voice of Elizabeth Daily.
9.00 **Film: The Boxtrolls (2014).** Stop-motion animated fantasy, with the voice of Isaac Hempstead Wright.
10.55 **Film: Toy Story That Time Forgot (2014).** Short animated comedy, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen.
11.20 **Toy Story Toons.** Three short animations featuring characters from the Pixar films. (R)
11.55 **Film: Toy Story OF TERROR! (2013).** Animated Halloween special, with the voice of Tom Hanks.
12.20 **Father Christmas.** Festive animation based on Raymond Briggs' book. (R)
12.50 **Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas.** Festive spin-off of the animated films, with the voice of John Leguizamo. (R)
1.20 **The Simpsons.** Marge begins a new life protecting endangered aquatic creatures. (R)
1.55 **The Simpsons.** Lisa becomes a Buddhist. (R)
2.25 **The Simpsons.** The children are trapped in school. (R)
3.00 **The World's Most Expensive Christmas.** Documentary following suppliers who provide a bespoke service to the super-rich. (R)
4.00 **Kirstie's Handmade Christmas.** Kirstie Allsopp features craft and recipe ideas, including diorama baubles. (R)
5.00 **Channel 4 News.**
5.10 **Gogglebox Christmas Special.** Young TV viewers appraise the programmes of 2016. (R)
6.10 **Film: Crocodile Dundee (1986).** An Australian hunter with a larger-than-life reputation accompanies a reporter from the Outback to the urban jungle of Manhattan. Comedy, starring Paul Hogan and Linda Kozlowski.
8.00 **The World's Best Christmas Lights: From Liverpool to Bethlehem.** Documentary following a team of Liverpool-based Christmas decorators to Palestine, where they have been hired to add some festive flavour to Bethlehem's Manger Square.
9.00 **Film: The Wolverine (2013).** The former member of the X-Men travels to Japan, and protects a tycoon's granddaughter from assassins. Superhero adventure spin-off, with Hugh Jackman and Tao Okamoto.
11.20 **Film: Gladiator (2000).** A Roman general is forced to fight as a gladiator and uses his position to seek revenge for the murder of his family. Oscar-winning epic, with Russell Crowe and Joaquin Phoenix.
2.10 **Hollyoaks.** Omnibus. Tony and Diane end up arguing at the carol concert, James is intrigued by Sami, and Ryan is worried by new information regarding Amy's murder case.
4.45 **Location, Location, Location.** Catching up with first-time buyers in the Cotswolds and London. (R)
5.40 **Film: The Little Penguin Pororo's Racing Adventure (2013).** Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of Zhan Jia.

Channel 5

6.00 **Milkshake! Little Princess 6.10 Wanda and the Alien 6.20 Poppy Cat 6.25 Whisper 6.30 Milkshake! Monkey 6.35 Milkshake! Bopping About 6.40 Simon 6.45 Peppa Pig 6.50 Peppa Pig 7.00 Bob the Builder 7.10 Paw Patrol 7.40 Olly the Little White Van 8.00 Paw Patrol 8.20 Nella the Princess Knight 8.35 Noddy: Toyland Detective 8.50 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.05 Shimmer and Shine 9.15 Digby Dragon 9.30 Peppa Pig 9.40 Peppa Pig 9.50 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 10.05 Olly the Little White Van**

10.15 **The Gadget Show.** Jon Bentley and Craig Charles assess three rival electric cars. Last in the series. (R)
11.05 **Film: A Christmas Story (1983).** Family comedy, starring Peter Billingsley.
12.55 **Film: A Heavenly Christmas (2016).** Festive romance, starring Kristin Davis.
2.40 **Film: Scrooge (1970).** Musical fantasy, starring Albert Finney.
3.40 **5 News Update.**
3.45 **Film: Scrooge (1970).** Concluded. **Elf: The Musical.** A musical stage adaptation of the festive film of the same name.
8.00 **Blind Date Christmas Special.** A festive edition of the matchmaking show, in which Paul O'Grady gives a real-life Prince Charming a chance to find romance with either Cinderella, Snow White or Tinkerbell.
9.00 **Cruising with Jane McDonald Christmas Special.** A seasonal edition finds the presenter on board the SS Antoinette travelling up the Rhine. She also visits some of the most dazzling Christmas markets that Europe has to offer.
10.00 **Jane and Friends at Christmas.** Jane McDonald hosts this festive variety show, performing her favourite songs. She is also joined by Coronation Street's Shayne Ward and the cast of hit musical Elf.
10.50 **Chas & Dave's Xmas Knees Up!** Festive entertainment from 1982, which sees the Cockney duo joined by celebrity guests Eric Clapton, Jimmy Cricket, Jim Davidson, Albert Lee and Lennie Peters. (R)
11.45 **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces action from the weekend's games, including Sheffield Wednesday v Middlesbrough, Wolverhampton Wanderers v Ipswich Town, and Aston Villa v Sheffield United.
12.45 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** All the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two.
1.15 **SuperCasino.** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
3.10 **Our Dream Hotel.** Alex Polizzi helps two entrepreneurs build their guest house business in rural Turkey.
4.00 **GPs: Behind Closed Doors.** A patient complains of dizzy spells whenever he goes for a jog. (R)
4.50 **Access.** Showbiz news and gossip. (R)
4.55 **House Doctor.** A Victorian house in Norwich. (R)
5.20 **Wildlife SOS.** (R)
5.45 **Chinese Food in Minutes.** Two chili-based suppers. (R)



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FEMALE, 67, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals out/in, looking for male 68-75 for friendship maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 4277942

SUE, 44, country loving lady, tall, slim looking for similar country gent to share adventures in the great outdoors with. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 429251

GEORGINA, 46yrs, sophisticated professional lady (teacher), quite firm but kind! Interested in finding out more? I am interested to chat to you so call me today. Text Only. Box: 4151593

MARIELLE, 45yrs, curly attractive lady, likes older men. I'm married so you must be discrete. Lets meet up, and make each other smile again. Call me and let's get to know each other. Tel: 0906 510 3039 Box: 426853

FEMALE, 58yrs, old, looking for a nice man, non-smoker, clean-shaven. I enjoy walking, meals in/out, musical shows and much more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5662627

AMANDA, 36yrs, attractive lady. Solvent and well educated and spoken. Feminine figure with large breasts. Hoping to meet a broad-minded gent, any age for discreet relationship. I don't mind if you are married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 510 3035 Box: 429287

PAMELA, mature presentable lady, well educated, solvent, very young at heart. Hoping to meet presentable gent. Call me. Or text if you prefer. I promise to get back to you. She's attractive and waiting to meet you. You must be 40+ with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 429329

YAZ, Asian lady, 32yrs, very slim and pretty. Hoping to meet a strong minded, dominant, resourceful man. Mature please 45+ Text Only. Box: 4177148

LINDA, late 50s lady, promises to call back if you text or call. She's attractive and waiting to meet you. You must be 40+ with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 429327

SOPHIE, 46yrs, attractive professional lady with time on her hands. Hoping to meet a nice gent of any age, text fun, flir, possible meeting. Text Only. Box: 4126579

ATTRACTIVE widowed lady, 70yrs but looks much much younger. GSOH, fun loving. WLTM man 67+ for loving tender relationship. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 429327

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Impreza remains a left-field choice

By Jon Reay

This is the latest version of Subaru's bread-and-butter, Ford Focus-sized hatchback. The Impreza name dates back to 1992, and while it evokes memories of fire-breathing WRX and STI models for many people in the UK, Subaru explains that this car isn't trying to live up to that reputation.

Instead, it's built in the image of the original, more modestly powered model: offering a capable all-wheel-drive car for people who don't necessarily want a high-riding SUV.

Subaru stresses that the car is new from the ground up, complete with brand new platform that will underpin future models in the range. The focus, says Subaru, has been on better driving dynamics and safety – the latter taken care of by a whole array of safety gear, headlined by the brand's ubiquitous EyeSight forward-facing dual-camera tech.

There have been plenty of changes under the skin, too. Subaru says the steering is now 0.1 seconds quicker to react (bear with us, it does make a difference), the already low centre of gravity has been dropped further still, the gearbox has lost 8kg of weight and the chassis is as much as 100 per cent stiffer in some areas. It's all been with the aim of making sure the Impreza isn't just safer than before, but that bit better to drive too.

There's a choice of two engines: a 1.6 and a 2.0-litre, both naturally aspirated petros.

Subaru continues to use its 'Boxer' engine configuration, which keeps the centre of gravity low and means it can slide in the brand's traditional 'symmetrical' all-wheel-drive system.

There's no diesel option, but fuel economy is reasonable for a petrol-powered car with

permanent all-wheel-drive and an automatic gearbox. For now, we'd opt for the 2.0-litre: there's a more usable amount of power, and unlike the wheezy 1.6, it has the added bonus of steering wheel-mounted paddles for awaking the gearbox from its slumber.

Subaru has done away with a manual gearbox option, leaving only a CVT. It won't be to all tastes, but as CVTs go it's not too bad. Most of the time it's quite pleasant to use: smooth, unobtrusive, and willingly changes up and down its virtual gears without fuss.

Subaru has concentrated heavily on making the Impreza feel 'safe' on the road, which translates to predictable handling and almost unshakeable levels of grip, courtesy of its 'active torque split' four-wheel-drive system. Chuck the Impreza into a bend or roundabout with some vigour and it's easy to be impressed by its determination to hang on.

Thankfully the Impreza rides extremely well too, with very little intrusion from potholes, speed bumps and the like, while body roll is kept reasonably well in check as well. Dynamically in fact, it's up there with some of its more mainstream rivals, and has something of a unique character of its own.

Imprezas have had something of a tumultuous history when it comes to styling, and even Subaru admits that the previous car wasn't anything to shout about in the looks department. To our eyes the new model is an improvement. It's a shame though that Subaru has chosen not to offer the more attractive 18-inch alloy wheels of our test car on UK models. They'd go some way to help the Impreza shake off its dowdy utilitarian image.

There are some definite improvements over the old car inside – though things are still inescapably Japanese. Material quality is still



The Impreza is now dynamically very capable, doesn't look half bad and has a seriously generous standard kit list

miles off that of the opposition, while Subaru freely admits that the dash hasn't been designed with purely aesthetics in mind.

What has been concentrated on is ergonomics: things like the climate controls are all easy to reach, and can be used without taking your eyes off the road, while dials are clear to read if not inspiring to look at.

Things are pretty roomy inside too – not something you could always say about the Impreza. Boot space is competitive at 385 litres, and rear leg room is impressive too: easily large enough for four six-foot-tall adults.

Subaru is only bringing one trim level to

the UK: the 'SE'. There's plenty bundled in, particularly in terms of safety: you'll find blind-spot monitoring, rear cross traffic alert, pre-collision braking assist, lane departure warning and auto high-beam all as standard. Adaptive cruise control is thrown in too, as are auto LED headlights that now steer around corners, rain sensitive wipers, keyless entry, a reversing camera, climate control and heated front seats. Infotainment is taken care of with an eight-inch touch screen which works with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, though no built-in sat nav is available.

The previous Impreza had been all-but

forgotten in the UK; and it's likely that the new model will suffer the same fate. There are big improvements over the old car, but without some major UK-centric tweaks to its powertrain and gearbox, it'll continue to be a left-field choice.

That's a shame, because it's now dynamically very capable, doesn't look half bad and has a seriously generous standard kit list. If you're after a small family hatchback and value safety above all else, the Impreza is certainly worth a look.

Model: Subaru Impreza 2.0 Lineartronic
Price as tested: £24,995

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Kia plug-in hybrids win two top green awards

Kia Motors (UK) Ltd. is delighted to announce two wins at the Next Green Car Awards 2017, with the all-new Niro Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV) winning in the crossover category and the all-new Optima Sportswagon PHEV winning in the estate category.

Both launched this year, the Niro and Optima Sportswagon PHEVs are another big step towards Kia's aim of reducing the average CO2 emissions of its entire range by 25 per cent, by 2020.

Leaders

The Niro PHEV can drive for up to 36 miles on electric power alone, whilst the Optima Sportswagon PHEV can travel for up to 38 miles in all-electric mode.

Next Green Car commented: "Kia is one of the market leaders in terms of PHEV electric range, and the Niro Plug-In Hybrid benefits from this focus."

"Throw in the fact that the PHEV technology is wrapped up in practical crossover packaging, and the Niro Plug-In Hybrid is expected to quickly climb the electric vehicle sales charts. For those wanting value-for-money motoring, practicality, and a plug-in powertrain, the Optima Sportswagon Plug-In Hybrid is one of the best options around."

"With a long electric range and load-lugging potential, Kia's Optima estate



Kia's all-new Optima Sportswagon PHEV won the estate category

opens up PHEV models to many buyers that need a large car but with low running costs."

Having this choice of Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles within the Kia range has enabled us to better meet our customers' changing needs – it's a very exciting time for Kia."

The Next Green Car Awards recognises the very best green cars that are currently and soon-to-be available. The judging is based on a number of factors, but is focused on the Next Green Car (NGC) rating, based upon real-world emissions data. This ultimately aids the judges in identifying the greenest models available.

"The Niro PHEV and Optima Sportswagon PHEV are great additions to both the Kia fleet and

New Mondeo is easier on the pocket

By Ian Donaldson

Ford has tried to make life simpler – and cheaper – for anyone who fancies a new Mondeo.

Simpler, by cutting the previous seven model variants to five and easier on the pocket, especially for the company car drivers who make up the vast majority Mondeo drivers, by cutting list prices by up to £3,200.

Not that simple, in fact, with the new Mondeo range stretching to 75 versions, taking in four-door saloon, five-door hatchback and estate and powered by diesel or petrol engines, or a petrol/electric hybrid.

Oh, and don't forget manual or automatic transmissions and the possibility of all-wheel drive.

As to the price cuts; perhaps they now reflect the sort of discount you'd have already been able to wangle from your dealer in a private sale. More importantly, they lower the benefit in kind (BIK) pinned on a company car user.

Take the cheapest new Mondeo, a £19,455 Zetec 1.0T Ecoboost hatchback (hardly anyone will) and a company car user will be massaged a gentle £70.51 a month in BIK if they're a 20 per cent taxpayer.

At the other end of the Mondeo scale, a £32,695 Vignale Estate with 2.0 diesel engine, auto gears and all-wheel drive (another ultra rare combination) will hit its 40 per cent taxpayer user for £324.40 a month.

Whichever new Mondeo you end up with it will now certainly come with DAB, cruise control, satellite navigation, front and rear parking sensors and automatic emergency city braking, this latter feature responsible for a two or three group drop in insurance



Ford has made buying a Mondeo simpler



The interior is neat and orderly



You won't have trouble beating 40 mpg in your diesel Mondeo

ratings, thanks to a lowered likelihood of bent bumpers.

Ford thinks private buyers will fancy a Mondeo in ST-Line trim, which adds £3,500 over the cost of an entry level Zetec but includes larger (18ins) alloy wheels, mildly lowered and stiffened suspension, front sports-style seats with red stitching, alloy foot pedals and a dark headliner.

They're in addition to a styling kit that marks

out an ST-Line car thanks to unique bumpers front and rear and lower side panels in body colour. Inside, you'll also discover smart velour floor mats, a push button starter and more red stitching to steering wheel, centre console and side trims.

Out on the road in a highly spec'd ST-Line, costing £26,595 and boasting automatic gears and all-wheel drive, you notice how much of the latest Mondeo stays unchanged

– and are thankful for it. Things start off well with a perfect driving position and set of clear instruments ahead of you and continue in similar fashion as you discover a car that rides the rougher streets of London with well damped aplomb.

The interior is neat and orderly but doesn't give off the posh car ambience that points people to dearer cars like an Audi but holds its own against an obvious competitor in the

equally roomy shape of Vauxhall's Insignia.

A range-topping Vignale version tried later was quieter still and presented a more modern and crisply digital instrument cluster but still wouldn't worry an Audi for instant interior appeal.

Still, you won't have trouble beating 40mpg in your diesel Mondeo and the taxman won't think Christmas has arrived when he asks for your Exchequer contribution.

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VW redefining its market with update

By Graham Breeze

Competition keeps growing so Volkswagen simply just up the stakes by improving the Golf – after all this is the model which started the hatchback sector.

There's nothing revolutionary about the updated version of the seventh generation Golf it's simply VW redefining its market segment by bringing 'big car' technology to the compact family car class.

It's a simple but clever move, after all why fix something that isn't broken. Growing sales figures across the globe prove the product fits, but now you get the option of all new engines with more technology, better connectivity and just a tweak to the styling package.

Golf now has an option for just about every possible buyer, whether private or fleet. In fact there are no less than 88 choices so you can expect to spend a bit of time in the showroom. And with prices ranging from £18,665 to £34,985 there's also a model for just about every pocket.

The UK line-up retains a familiar feel, beginning in the hatchback range with S and rising through SE, SE Nav, GT, R-Line, GTE, GTE Advance, e-Golf, GTD and GTD BlueLine to GTI, GTI Performance and, ultimately, R. The estate family offers generous choice, too, with S, SE, SE Nav, GT and GTD and GTD BlueLine models being joined by Alltrack and R.

You can't help but be impressed by the levels of technology introduced to the sector. For the first time in the compact class and depending on model, the new Discover

Navigation Pro radio-navigation and online system can be operated via gesture control.

Sporting a 9.2-inch screen, the system complements the Active Info Display that is also new in the Golf and appears as standard on all Performance Golfs.

The range of online services and apps has also been enlarged.

There's a lot more than a gimmick package on offer though. VW claims a new benchmark for assistance systems in the compact class, employing technologies that will significantly improve safety.

Technology

Depending on model, these include: City Emergency Braking with new pedestrian monitoring; a new Traffic Jam Assist that offers semi-automated driving at speeds of up to 37 mph and Emergency Assist which notices if the driver is incapacitated and initiates various measures to rouse them in escalating stages culminating in carrying out an emergency stop.

BlueMotion Technologies include a stop-start system and a mode for storing braking energy (regenerative braking). There was also an impressive safety package including all-round airbags and a full stability control package.

On test was a GTD 2.0 litre TDI 184PS version with seven-speed automatic gearing and priced at just under £30,000.

There was a top speed of 143mph, 0-62mph in 7.4 seconds, impressive CO2 emissions of only 124g/km and combined fuel figures of 60mpg.

Design modifications include new bumpers



Design modifications include new bumpers front and rear, new halogen headlights with LED daytime running lights or full LED headlights

front and rear, new halogen headlights with LED daytime running lights or full LED headlights – standard in higher specification cars and optional in other models – instead of xenon headlights; new front wings; and new full LED rear lights as standard for all Golf versions.

New wheel designs and body colours round

out the exterior update, while new trim panels and materials also upgrade the interior of the Golf.

Well weighted steering, choosing the adaptive damping system and the electronic differential mean the Golf remains a joy to drive – regardless of the road conditions. Volkswagen bosses have ensured that the

Golf will continue to grow sales with the latest improvements though there is a price to pay for the new technology.

Adding gesture control navigation, the driver assist package, LED headlights, chassis control and leather interior pushed the price up to £35,395 – and that's a lot to pay for a hatchback.

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Outsiders on target in a night of shocks

THE tables were turned as some of the outsiders in the Montgomeryshire and District Airgun League pulled off stunning performances in the latest action.

After a run of predictable results the previous week, the sport of shooting showed just how fickle a mistress it can be as the league heats up.

Guildford B celebrated their first win of the season when they shot against Forden, with the home side struggling to find their form. Catherine Farmer led the scoring for the Guils, shooting a season personal best of 34.2 to cement her side's domination of the match. With a win now under their belts, the team will be hungry for more success in the upcoming matches.

Edward Kelton continued his run of good form, opening the Crew Green A batting at Castle Caereinion with his fourth possible of the season.

His team evidently took inspiration from his performance, with Nigel Kelton also breaking the 35-point barrier.

Crew Green brought home the bacon in fine style, ending the match with a five point advantage over their hosts.

Meanwhile, Crew Green B were also in action, with a six-member Newtown team travelling to the Admiral Rodney.

The Chinese believe seven to be a lucky number, but evidently nobody had told Jess Corbett's team that as they overcame their numerical disadvantage to win with 199.7 points to CGB's 195.1, with Tabitha Corbett again shooting a possible, her fourth of the season.

Perhaps the tensest match of the evening took place between Guilsfield A and Churchstoke; the pressure manifesting itself in below-average scores for both teams.

There was very little between the two sides; with the two captains, Paul Phillips and Brian Davies, shooting identical scores in their round.

The lead changed hands repeatedly, and after the last shot of the match, frantic calculations took place to determine the winners. Churchstoke escaped by the skin of their teeth, taking the match by 0.4 points, with 200.3 to Guilsfield A's 199.9.

Perhaps the biggest shock of the evening came when a six-man Llanfair Caereinion visited Ardele, and stunned everyone by outshooting the former league champions.

Nick Lloyd's team shot their hearts out and achieved a score far above their season average, with Dai Tom Williams being the evening's highest scorer with a superb 35.6.

Despite positives from Jack Francis and Richard Lewis, the home side couldn't quite overhaul the visitors; the final 198.1 - 199.3 result going in Llanfair's favour.

The Llanfair team have struggled at various points thus far but with this performance they sent a clear message – any team in this league are worthy adversaries and that no result is a forgone conclusion.

Seven shooters achieved scores of 35 points or above this week; Nigel Kelton (35.1), Owen Stimpson (35.2), Edward Kelton and Jack Francis (35.3), Richard Lewis (35.4), Tabitha Corbett (35.5) and Dai Tom Williams (35.6).

Ladies sign off with loss

OSWESTRY Ladies ended the first half of the season in the Cheshire Women's Hockey League division two with a 5-2 loss at Neston Ladies II.

The defeat sees them stay third bottom, with their next game home to Bebbington Ladies on Saturday, January 6.

The home side looked strong up front in a for-

Eagles edged out in impressive display

RUGBY by John Bridgwater

OSWESTRY narrowly failed to become the first side to win away at Heaton Moor this season after being edged out 20-12 by their Stockport hosts in rugby's South Lancs and Cheshire Two.

It was an intriguing battle between an Eagles side so impressive on the road this season, and a Heaton Moor outfit who have not tasted defeat on home soil this term.

Oswestry pushed the Cheshire side all the way, but ultimately just missed out in their last action before the Christmas break.

They were looking to avenge a narrow defeat by just six points earlier in the campaign, and were up for the challenge in testing conditions.

Although they had led 12-10, second half pressure from their opponents turned the game around to leave the visitors to return home empty handed. The Eagles had fallen behind to a controversial try after just a minute when a strong Heaton drive, roared on by their home support, resulted in a turnover ball which saw their centre speed over the line.

However, it appeared that the player did not ground the ball and knocked on, but the referee - who was unsighted - contentiously awarded the score to give the hosts a seven point advantage with the conversion added.

Oswestry looked to claw their way back into the game, but their efforts were met by some strong defence that halted them in their tracks.

Heaton missed a chance to add to their lead when spurning a penalty which resulted in Luca Owen-Youens catching the loose ball and launching a strong run out of his 22 in which he knocked a couple of Heaton players out of the way before finding touch.

Close range

A resilient Oswestry were starting to make inroads with some big hits and their efforts took them into their counterparts' 22.

A powerful drive from the forwards pushed the hosts back towards their own line, the ball rolling onto the posts before captain Andrew Smith drove over for the score from close range, with Luca Owen-Youens levelling matters with the conversion.

The Eagles continued to show plenty of resistance, but suffered a blow when Smith was handed a yellow card for an issue in the scrum in the half hour.

Now down to 14 men, the visitors managed to survive for the next 10 minutes with Michael Keaveny coming on to join the Oswestry pack.

Despite a player short, Oswestry were now pushing Heaton back towards their 22 and their drive saw Jack Charmley, Nick Clay and Connor Blair combine before releasing Jonathan Hughes who ran in a wonderful try from over 20 yards for a 12-7 lead with the conversion missed.

With Smith back on the pitch after the restart, Oswestry were again looking to take the game to their hosts before the half time whistle went.

Early in the second half, Oswestry conceded a soft penalty which saw Heaton reduce the arrears to 12-10.

The Eagles were again under the cosh with Heaton gaining ground into the 22, but they repelled their visitors before threatening at the other end as Nick Clay was held just short of the try line.

However, the home side were not to be denied



The Oswestry pack get a shove on near the hosts' line and (below) Fletcher Owen-Youens in a line-out



despite the visitors' efforts, and edged ahead in the last quarter to secure a hard-fought win.

After a creditable first half of the campaign Oswestry now take a break with their next league game at home to Didsbury and Toch H on Saturday, January 6.

OSWESTRY II, looking to push up the North West League division four south, were handed the points as Macclesfield Fourth pulled out of their fixture. Their next action is away to Lymm Fourths on Saturday, January 6.

COBRA back and show no signs of rust

RUGBY by John Bridgwater

COBRA moved up to fourth in the Welsh League division two (north) after coming from behind to secure a solid 17-7 home success against Llanidloes.

Playing their first league game since October 21, the Meifod side prevailed in heavy conditions against their Powys rivals to keep alive their chances of promotion.

Victory took them up one place to fourth, and they are six points adrift of second placed Wrexham with two games in hand.

It has been a frustrating spell for COBRA who have only had a couple of cup excursions in the last two months, and they looked rusty at times in the mud against determined opponents.

After turning down an early penalty chance, they trailed when Llanidloes prop Matthew Skinner went over for a try converted by Adam Price following some forward pressure.

The home side looked strong up front in a for-

ward orientate battle, but Llanidloes held out until just before half time when a spell of pressure ended with an unconverted try in the corner.

Scrum half Bryn Davies took a quick tap penalty and, despite being held up close to the line, open side flanker Aled Humphreys powered over from close range.

After the break, the Meifod men held the upper hand in the scrums, which resulted in a couple of pushover tries from No8 Dorian Lloyd, the first of which was converted by Will Worthington for a 17-7 scoreline.

Worthington missed a couple of kicks at goal to have increased the margin, but the home side had done enough to claim the spoils in testing conditions.

It was COBRA's second home win this season against Llanidloes, while the sides will meet twice in the new year, one in the league and also in the quarter-final of the Conwy Land Rover North Wales Intermediate Cup.

The Meifod side have no game on Saturday, before visiting local rivals Welshpool on Saturday December 30.

WELSHPOOL found Denbigh too hot to handle as they crashed 79-0 at the unbeaten leaders to remain in the basement places in division two.

Denbigh, who are 20 points clear at the top, crossed the line 13 times in their 10th straight win. Owain Davies scored four touchdowns, and there were two apiece for Dan Sullivan and Aldyn Jones.

Pool, meanwhile, face a trip to local rivals Newtown in the last eight of the Intermediate Plate, the tie to be played before February 17.

Shropshire U18 bowls team facing tough season

LIFE could be about to get a whole lot tougher for Shropshire's under-18 bowls team in the British junior county championships.

Big changes to the Drakes Pride-sponsored competition, including a new league structure to stop the mismatches of recent seasons, are proposed for next year by Warwick & Worcester – with the support of Shropshire junior selector Phil Scott.

And with Shropshire currently in a period of transition, having not reached the final since 2014, it means difficult matches every fixture could lie ahead.

The plan is to reduce fixtures from 24 bowlers to 20-a-side – with 10 home and 10 away – to take the pressure off counties who struggle to field junior sides and have to withdraw from the championship.

Counties would then be placed in three groups of five – based on their results from the last four years – playing each other on a league basis to determine the champions of each section, followed by promotion and relegation of the top and bottom teams.

Thanks to more wins than losses since 2014, Shropshire would feature in the top group alongside reigning champions Yorkshire, mighty Warwick & Worcester, now strong Wales and Derbyshire.

Shropshire lost to W&W by 50 shots in a group game this year to miss out on the knockout stages and have generally found the going much tougher at junior level in recent times.

But Scott, who is also junior secretary of the British Parks, feels changes are needed to keep the championship thriving.

A W & W spokesman said the change to 20 bowlers per match "intends to strengthen the quality of bowls at the top level . . . and to encourage counties to remain in the competition where they may struggle to enter teams."

The supplementary competition would become a thing of the past, the spokesman adding that a league structure would 'maintain competitive games for all teams through the competition'.

W&W want the proposals discussed and voted on at the British association's rules revision meeting on January 20.

Presentation night change for bowlers

A NEW officer and changes to the annual presentation dinner are looming for Shropshire's biggest bowls league.

The appointment of an assistant competition secretary in 2018 was discussed at the SPS Whitchurch League's latest executive meeting.

If approved, they will take charge when comps chief Phil Scott – who also has British and North Shropshire Parks roles and Shropshire junior duties – is unavailable.

The assistant's job will also include publishing details of competitions to try and ease Scott's load and increase entry numbers.

League secretary Alison Hine is also working on changes to the 2018 prize-giving function, with the goal being to boost numbers attending back towards the full house days at Whitchurch Civic Centre.

"We are going to bring the dinner forward a week to miss the school half term week – and are also looking at having some form of entertainment again," explained Hine.

They would make more time for entertainment by not presenting any junior trophies at the dinner – all the under-12, 15 and 18 winners would instead receive their rewards on the actual day of the competition.

Welshpool sidelined – and rivals close gap

AFTER being sidelined by the weather, pacesetters Welshpool Town saw their lead at the top of the Spar Mid Wales League division one trimmed to seven points by two of their chief rivals.

Carno kept up the pressure on the Maesydre men with a 6-2 beating of struggling Borth United on the 3G at Aberystwyth's Park Avenue ground.

Jac Petrie and Jordan Jones both scored twice, with Ioan Humphreys and Peter Rees also finding the net as the visitors moved into second spot.

Llanidloes Town are also seven points behind the leaders, with two games in hand, after taking over in third position with a 4-2 victory away to Tywyn Bryncrug.

Being the only other first division game to survive the winter blast, George Clarke scored twice in the first half to put the Daffs on course, his first a fine strike from an angle before rounding the keeper to double the lead.

The lively Ryan Biggs then set up a third after excellent work down the right, firing in a cross for Josh Hartrick to tap in.

Tywyn made the most of some defensive hesitation to pull one back, and scored a second in the last minute from the penalty shot after Drew Reynolds had handled.

But the Daffs were not to be denied as they sealed victory moments later when Biggs again showed his energy down the flank before crossing for Richie Evans to convert.

Mid-table Berriew failed to make up ground after being edged out 2-1 at Aberaeron, Steffan Rogers getting their reply.

The weather again decimated the programme with high flying Welshpool's home fixture with Radnor Valley, and Llanfair United's trip to struggling Machynlleth, two of the casualties.

Third place

Second placed Llanrhedra, looking to keep up the pressure on the leaders, were also kicking their heels as their home clash with Llandrindod Wells fell victim to the weather.

Kerry's game at Bow Street and Churchstoke's home encounter with Knighton Town were also off.

Just one game survived in the second division, with Aberystwyth University notching a 3-0 home victory against Dolgellau.

Despite being down to 10 men for 55 minutes, the students showed their strength in heavy conditions to secure the spoils that saw them cement third place in the table.

OWAIN ap Gareth was harshly dismissed for two bookings on 35 minutes, but the home side responded with plenty of resolve.

They led at the break with a penalty from Liam Powell after James Watts had been brought down, before Powell notched his second and Watts sealed the win.

Games off included Llanstanffraid Villages' trip to Newbridge and Montgomery's visit to Brecon Northcote.

■ Carno boss Chris Davies, whose side have climbed up to second in the Spar Mid Wales League division one table, has been named the division's manager of the month while Brecon Northcote's Anthony Thornley has picked up the second division accolade.

Bow Street's Tom Evans is the division one player of the month, while Jack Biggs (Hay St Mary's) is the recipient of the second division award.

Frustrated Town left on the sidelines

FC Oswestry Town's revival in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one was again halted by the weather.

After their home fixture with high flying Silsden was off the week before due to snow, Town were hopeful of getting back to action away to Cheshire side Sandbach United.

But the encounter succumbed to a frozen pitch, with the decision to call off made following an early morning pitch inspection.

"With the run we've been on, it's frustrating as we

now feel we're good enough to get points from every game," said joint manager Ryan Butcher.

"There's not much we can do about it, but we will train twice this week and look to carry on the form into the New Year."

Next up, Town - who are top of the form league - are away to mid-table side Abbey Hutton United on Saturday, before hosting Shropshire rivals and title contenders Whitchurch Alport at Park Hall on Boxing Day (3pm).

"That's going to be a real test to see where we

are," added Ryan.

The Oswestry side, who still have 21 league games remaining, have bolstered their squad by signing centre midfielder Ed Moss from Whitchurch Alport, and Sam Spridgeon, a pacy forward from Chester.

Meanwhile, Town's derby against West Midlands League premier division side Ellesmere Rangers in the quarter-final of the Shropshire Challenge Cup was also postponed due to snow on the Park Hall pitch.

It has been rearranged for next month.

Guils frustrated as Rhyl ten stand firm

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

GUILSFIELD remain in fifth position in the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance after being frustrated by a 10-man Rhyl in a goalless stalemate at Clos Myton.

The villagers had the better of the encounter, but could not find a way through their visitors who played the last 35 minutes with a man down following the dismissal of Chris Durkin.

It was the second time the sides had drawn this season but, despite reflecting on two points dropped in the return, the Guils could take some consolation from preserving their unbeaten home record against resilient opponents.

With the pitch holding up well despite the recent snow and rain, both sides had chances to make the breakthrough in the first half.

Rhyl almost took the lead on 12 minutes when Alun Webb beat home keeper Andy Wycherley to a ball over the top but rolled his shot narrowly wide of the post.

Webb also put another effort wide but Guilsfield had a good opening when Asa Hamilton broke through the defence only to be denied by keeper Rory Crowther.

The encounter threatened to boil over early in the second half following a period of strong challenges, which eventually led to Rhyl's Durkin seeing red for a wild lunge.

Despite a man down, the Lilywhites held firm, with a succession of last ditch tackles and blocks denying the home side.

Adam Jenkins had the best chances to break the deadlock with a free kick which was tipped past the post by Crowther, and then the same player could only find the side netting from a close range effort.

It was a first clean sheet of the season for Rhyl, but the Guils would have been disappointed not to have found a way through as they look to keep up the pressure on the leaders.

Postponed

Caersws, needing points to climb clear of relegation danger, were again frustrated by their weather as their trip to fellow strugglers Queens Park was postponed.

Meanwhile, Newtown gained three crucial points to keep alive their chances of a top six place in the JD Welsh Premier with a 2-1 win over Llandudno at Latham Park.

The Robins took a 42nd minute lead when Luke Boundford lobbed advancing former Newtown keeper Dave Roberts.

The visitors were back on level terms just past the hour mark when Shaun Cavanagh volleyed into the roof of the net from a James Joyce cross.

But substitute Joe Kenton came off the bench to the winner 10 minutes from time when he cut in from the right before angling a shot past Roberts.

Ground staff worked tirelessly throughout the day to make the fixture possible, but it was Llandudno who warmed to the challenge early on during a cold night.

Apart from a wayward long range Tom Goodwin effort, it was Iwan Williams' troops who had the chances, with Marc Williams heading against the bar.

Toby Jones went narrowly close to giving the visitors the lead on the 25 minute mark when shooting just wide from 20 yards.

Craig Williams had a free kick saved with the Robins' first on target, before Marc Williams and Jones both saw shots blocked by some dogged Newtown defending.

The deadlock was almost broken five minutes from half time as Newtown keeper Dave Jones was closed down by Williams and the ball spun towards the goal, but the stopper managed to get back and save his own blushes.

Medal joy for young Olympians



Jack Tinney, Aaron Warburton and Charlie White Jones - the leaders of the Olympians' bronze medal winning under-11 boys team

OSWESTRY Olympians Juniors secured three medals when the Shropshire Young Athletes' League concluded for the season with the final race at Oswestry School.

Liam Rawlings was the undisputed winner of the under-15 boys with a perfect score of four wins from four races, while Jack Tinney ended up a double medalist with an individual silver and a team bronze in the under-11 boys

For the final race of the season, the seven strong under-11 girls team were first to take on the 1500 metre course.

Evie Foster was the first Olympian home in ninth place. Jess Steel, Seren Roberts, Libby Williams and Shannon Wilson all came home in the top 30 while Isla Rothera and Katie Hotchkiss both broke the ten minute barrier.

The under-11 boys also fielded seven athletes for the same 1500 metre course.

A team award seemed on the cards when Charlie White Jones came in fifth, Jack Tinney

sixth and Aaron Warburton eighth, while Morgan Hodgkiss, Daniel Morris and Freddie Heasmer-Jones kept up the momentum with top 30 finishes.

Despite picking up an ankle injury, Harry Cartwright showed great bravery to complete the course in a little over seven minutes.

The under-13 boys faced a 3km course with Massimo Wyatt again the first Olympian home in ninth.

Next was Tom Hotchkiss, closely followed by Ben Rothera and Sam Newton, to secure fourth place for the team both on the day and for the season.

Improving

Just three Olympians featured in the girls' under-13 2km race. Mia Wyatt maintained her record of being the first Olympian home, just one second ahead of the rapidly improving Lucy Othen. Molly Tinney successfully completed the course in a little over nine minutes.

Fielding a full four runners for the first time this season, the

under-15 girls ended fourth on the day but fifth for the season.

Bethan Jones was the first Olympian home in 11th, just one place ahead of Mia Tate, while Anna Rothera and Katie Othen both successfully completed the course to secure points for the club.

Oswestry had just one under-15 boy entry in Liam Rawlings who did what he has done all season, leading from the start to finish over a quarter of a minute ahead of his nearest rival, William Kay of Telford. With Liam having won all three previous races, it took little time for the scorers to confirm him as the Shropshire under-15 boys champion.

Injuries robbed Tom Wilde and Ianto Owen of the chance to compete, but Matthew Collins kept the club flag flying coming home 11th in the under-17 boys 5km race.

With the Young Athletes League now completed for 2017, the focus turns to the Shropshire Championships for all ages under-13 and above at Attingham Park on Saturday, January 6.

Forden are spot-on for tense win in Central Cup

FORDEN United kept their flag flying in the Central Wales Cup with a tense penalty shootout victory over Padarn United in the second round at Newtown's Latham Park.

The sides had finished 2-2 in normal time of a closely contested encounter with Forden on the mark through Ryan Sutton and Carl Phillips.

They then produced an unblemished performance in the shootout by converting all five penalties, while Padarn crucially missed one when striking the bar. The winners are home to Kerry in the third round.

It was an excellent effort from Forden who, having trailed 1-0 at the break, then hit back to lead in the second period, before the visitors struck late on to level matters and set up a penalty decider.

Meanwhile, Welshpool and Guilsfield have both landed home ties in the third round of the Central Wales Cup.

After receiving byes in the second round, both now enter the competition with Pool welcoming Penrhyncoch and the Guilsfield entertaining Machynlleth.

Full third round draw

Welshpool v Penrhyncoch, Caersws v Aberystwyth, Gelli Newydd v Machynlleth, Knighton Town v Bow Street, Builth Wells v Llandysul, Carno v Bow Street, Bishop's Castle v Llanidloes, Llanidloes v Montgomery or Llandidloes Town, Llanymynech or Newcastle Emlyn v Four Crosses, Tywyn Bryncrug v Hay St Mary's, New Quay v Churchstoke, Radnor Valley v Llanrhedra, Llandrindod Wells v Borth, Waterlooville Rovers v Presteigne, Dyffryn Banw v Brecon Northcote or Aberdyfi, Forden v Kerry.

Big guns are out for chess Congress

SHROPSHIRE'S chess congress is shaping up to be a masterclass in its strongest section, with two Grandmasters and four International Masters already signed up for January's event, writes TOBY NEAL.

But one deadline for would-be entrants is fast approaching, as any entries received after December 22 will attract a £5 late entry fee.

The tournament from January 5 to 7 at the Wrekin Housing Trust in Telford is Shropshire's biggest chess event with a first prize of £1,000 in the Open section. And for the first time there will be three other sections - previously there have been two - giving players of all abilities better hopes of getting among the prize money.

Unless they take a bye in any round, players will all play five rounds over the weekend.

League games are of course taking a break over Christmas, and in two of the latest results Shrewsbury B drew against Division Two leaders Newport B, while Newport Juniors beat Priorslee Lions B.

Saints frozen off at double

LOOKING to push into the top half of the table, St Martins were frustrated by another blank weekend in the West Midlands League division one as the cold weather continued to bite.

After their midweek trip to Haughtmond in the quarter-finals of the TJ Vickers Shropshire FA County Cup was postponed, the Saints were again left kicking their heels when last Saturday's clash away to Tipton Town was called off.

The lack of action keeps St Martins just below mid table in 10th spot, one place above Tipton.

Dan Stevens' side were hoping to get back to action with a home encounter against Gornal Athletic on Saturday, followed by a trip to Allscott on Saturday, December 30.



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Fair play to Berriew who lead the way

BERRIEW are the high fliers in the Spar Mid Wales League fair play league this season with just five cautions and no red cards.

While the Rhiewsiders are leading the way, Welshpool Town are also keeping their cool on the pitch to occupy a top five berth having also had no player sent off this term.

By contrast, Llanrhedr are languishing second bottom in the table with four red cards and 18 cautions, and Llanfair United are just one place above after picking up three dismissals and 26 bookings.

Llanfawr Village are going well at the top of the second division fair play league, with just three bookings and no reds this term.

Guildfield are lying in fifth spot in the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance fair play table, with one red and 28 yellows, and lie 30 points behind leaders Porthmadog.

The New Saints are lying in fifth spot in the JD Welsh Premier fair play standings with one red and 19 cautions - 42 points adrift of leaders Barry Town United.

■■■■

The Spar Mid Wales League sees some appetising games in division one on Boxing Day as the race for honours continues.

High flying Welshpool Town make the short trip to Berriew who earned a last gasp 2-2 draw at Maesdyre in the first meeting between the sides a few weeks ago.

Llanfair United entertain Llanrhedr, two sides who are more than capable of challenging for honours, while second placed Carno welcome Tywyn Bryncrug.

■■■■

Guildfield look to consolidate their top five position in the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance when they host Powys rivals Caersws on Boxing Day (2.30).

The Gulls are going well this season, but were left frustrated in last weekend's 0-0 draw with Rhyl who played the last 35 minutes with 10 men.

However, they are still unbeaten at their Clos Mytton base and are currently seven points off the pace.

Clarke gets call for Windies tour

BATSMAN Joe Clarke has been confirmed in the England Lions squad to play in the West Indies in February and March next year.

The former Oswestry and current Worcestershire player has already been on tour with the Lions in Australia, and the 21-year-old will be joined by Lancashire's Keaton Jennings who will captain the side and Middlesex bowler Toby Roland-Jones return from injury.

Selector James Whitaker said: "We have selected a total of 22 players for these two series in the West Indies, to ensure we gain the most of assessing players in first-class and one-day cricket."

SAINTS TOP THE TREE AT XMAS

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

AFTER their midweek success, The New Saints will look to strengthen their hold on the JD Welsh Premier title chase when they head into a busy festive spell.

Early goals from Jamie Mullan and Ryan Brobbel put the Saints on course for a 3-0 victory over close rivals Connah's Quay Nomads at Park Hall on Tuesday night, with Jon Routledge sealing the spoils 13 minutes from time.

That win put the defending champions four points clear of second placed Bangor City and seven ahead of the Nomads – as well as having a game in hand.

Boss Scott Ruscoe reflected on one of his best side's best performances of the season, adding: "To score two goals so early on settled our nerves. We defended fantastically and played some great stuff attacking wise, and we're really happy with three goals and a clean sheet."

"We've put a bit of distance between us at the top, but we won't get carried away, and we now need to maintain these standards going forward."

Ruscoe will want to maintain the momentum in another home outing on Friday night when Aberystwyth Town are the visitors to Park Hall (7.45pm).

That encounter is then followed by a double header against Newtown, with the Saints visiting Latham Park on Boxing Day before hosting the return on Saturday, December 30, both with 2.30pm kick-offs.

With the games coming thick and fast, the league leaders then head to Bala Town for a televised encounter on January 2 before visiting struggling Prestatyn Town the following Friday.

First up, their focus will be on an Aberystwyth side that has eased basement concerns with a string of impressive results, including last weekend's 7-1 thrashing of Prestatyn.

The Saints themselves were made to battle all the way before overcoming the Black and Greens 2-1 away back in October, but will be confident of completing a double on Friday night.

They have a good home record against the Seasiders, losing just once back in September 1993, while they have won 19 times and drawn five.

The convincing midweek victory against last season's runners-up Connah's Quay could prove a decisive moment as the Saints chase a seventh successive league crown.

They never looked back after Mullan, from a rebound, and Brobbel, following fine run, both scored inside the first 13 minutes.

Top scorer Greg Draper also found the net, only to be denied by the offside flag, but the Nomads sounded a warning when Nathan Woolfe rattled the bar from outside the box just before half time.

Snow joke at the golf club



Skipper Marie Male drives in to office before joining in a snowball fight. Pics: Ken Done.



IT was more snow balls than golf balls as Oswestry Golf Club's new lady captain Marie Male braved the elements when driving into office.

The new captain for 2018 was joined by a healthy turnout of members who, having wrapped up warm, first had to clear the snow from the first tee in order for Marie to hit the first shot in the traditional driving-in ceremony.

Afterwards, the newly installed captain joined fellow members for a snowball fight outside the club in Queen's Head to celebrate the event.

Golf pro Richard Edwards said: "It was a great day, a bit of fun."

"We had a really good turnout of members despite the weather, with 30-40 here. The temperature outside was minus four degrees."

All-rounder Roman gets England call

YOUNG all-rounder Roman Walker, who featured on a number of occasions for Oswestry last season, has been selected for the England under-19s World Cup squad.

Wrexham-born Walker, 17, a Glamorgan Academy player, was confirmed in the 15-man squad for the tournament to be held in New Zealand next month.

The 6ft 3ins hard hitting batsman and pace bowler, who played for Oswestry in the Birmingham League, is joined by Glamorgan team-mate Prem Sisodiya while Yorkshire's Harry Brook will captain the side.

"The players have shown with their performances in the Tri-Series in South Africa over the last couple of weeks that they can travel with plenty of optimism," said David Graveney, a member of the Under-19s selection panel.

"This is an exciting opportunity to travel to New Zealand, and to test themselves against the outstanding players from other countries in this age group. "It's also worth congratulating Middlesex, Somerset, Worcestershire and Glamorgan, who contribute the majority of the squad, as a reward for the quality of their Academies."

Head coach Jon Lewis will be assisted by Jonathan Trott as batting coach, Neil Killeen as fast bowling coach, and Chris Taylor as fielding coach.

The team play warm-up games against Ireland and Sri Lanka before the World Cup group matches get underway from January 15-20 with games against Namibia, Bangladesh and Canada.

Oswestry sign off with narrow defeat

DESPITE tries from skipper Andrew Smith and Jonathan Hughes, Oswestry's rugby players just failed to become the first side to win at Heaton Moor in the South Lancs and Cheshire Two.

They had led 12-7, but the Stockport hosts clawed their way back in the second half to prevail 20-12 to complete the double over their visitors.

The Eagles now take a break from league action before hosting Didsbury and Toch H on Saturday, January 6.

COBRA made a welcome return to action in the Welsh League division two (north) as they ran out 17-7 winners at home to Llanidloes.

Playing their first league game since October 21, the Meifod side prevailed in heavy conditions against their Powys rivals to keep alive their chances of promotion.

Victory took them up one place to fourth, and they are six points adrift of second placed Wrexham with two games in hand.

The Llanfair side face backlog of games in the new year as they are also involved in the Swalec Bowl against Pembroke, and the last eight of the Conwy Land Rover North Wales Intermediate Cup when they visit Llanidloes.

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